

LIMITED

READERSHIP

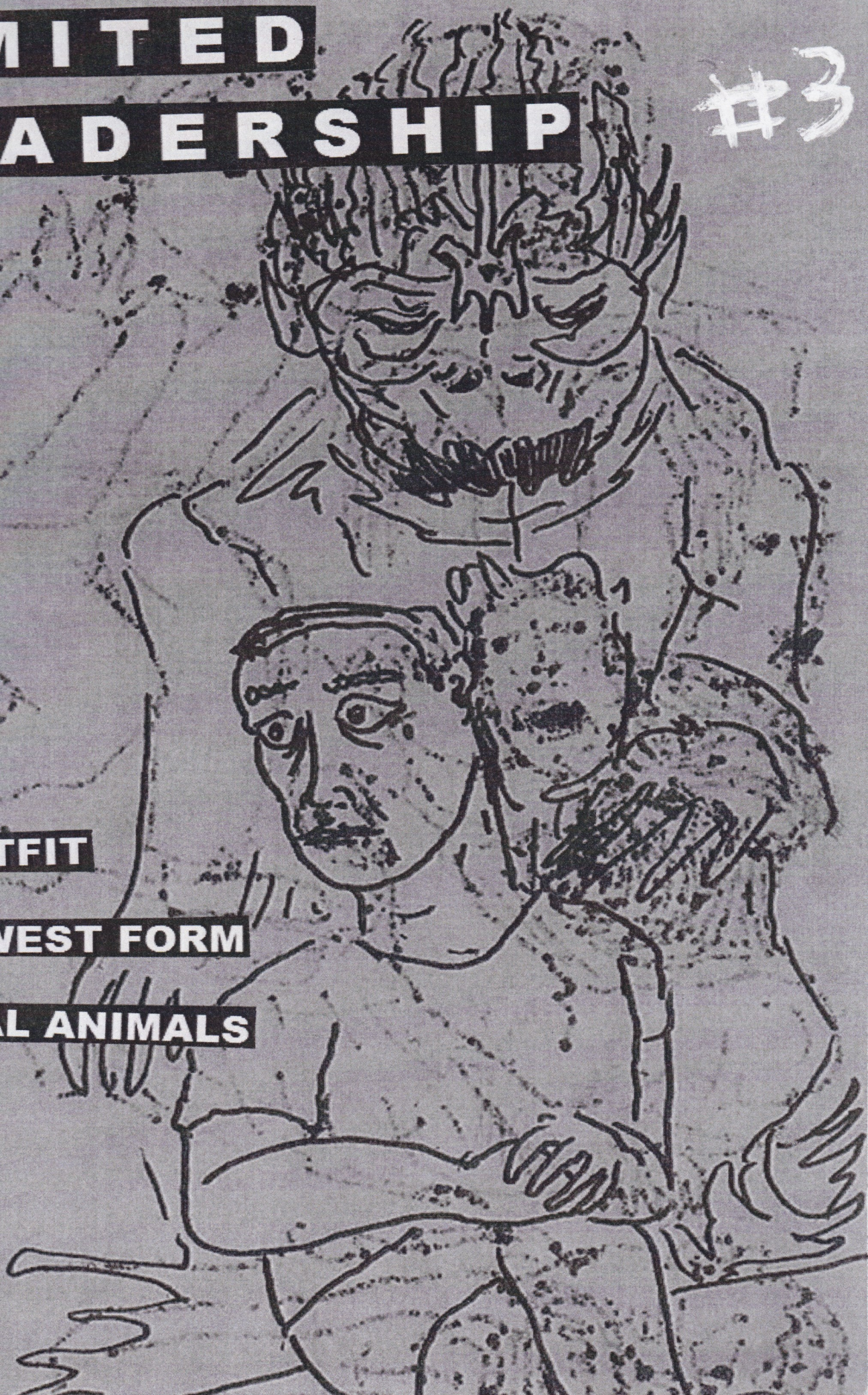
#3

GUN OUTFIT

THE LOWEST FORM

RATIONAL ANIMALS

GLAM



TOTAL CONTROL London Dec 2011



Photos by me, for once



CRAZY SPIRIT Antwerp July 2012

Info: (516) 531-9695

LIMITED READERSHIP #3
August 2012

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SOME THINGS LISTENED TO

ZZ Top: Rio Grande Mud & Tres Hombres LPs
ZOUO: Final Agony 7"
ULTRA-VIOLENT: Crime for Revenge 7"
TRONICS: Love Backed By Force LP
RAW POWER: Screams From The Gutter LP
MAN IS THE BASTARD: Abundance of Guns 7"
THE BLOOD: False Gestures for a Devious Public LP
FLAMIN' GROOVIES: Teenage Head & Flamingo LPs
HUSKER DU: Metal Circus 12"
THE SCIENTISTS: Last Night EP
SLOVENLY: We Shoot for the Moon LP
RAISE CAIN: Bootleg 7"
FUNKADELIC: s/t & Standing on the Verge LPs
DIE KREUZEN: s/t LP and October File LP
EASY ACTION: s/t LP
THE FALL: Bend Sinister LP
9 SHOCKS TERROR: Everything
GBH: City Baby Attacked/Revenge LPs
CRAWLING CHAOS: The Gas Chair LP
FREE: Tons of Sobs LP
DISASTER: War Cry LP
NEIL YOUNG: Ragged Glory LP
FEEDTIME: Everything
RUDIMENTARY PENI: Everything
IRON MAIDEN: Killers LP
ANTI-CIMEX: Criminal Trap 12"
FEHLFARBEN: Monarchie und Alltag LP
UPSIDEDOWN CROSS: Evilution tape
BLITZ: Voice of a Generation LP
SACCHARINE TRUST: Everything LP
LEMONHEADS: Hate Your Friends LP
BORN WITHOUT A FACE: both 7"s
BREATHING FIRE: Years of Lead LP
MORBID ANGEL: Altars of Madness LP
GRAND FUNK: Live Album 2xLP
LINDA PERHACS: Parallelograms LP
WIPERS: Youth of America LP
EINSTURZENDE NEUBAUTEN: Kalte Sterne 2x7"
SIR LORD BALTIMORE: s/t LP
CAUSE FOR ALARM s/t 7"
GRACE JONES: Warm Leatherette LP
RED CROSS: Born Innocent LP

INTRODUCTION

I finally knuckled down to finish this issue, the third in a potentially never ending barrage of punk-praising publications. Another example of an ugly person writing about ugly music, to a small audience of ugly people (yeah, you are). I wonder how many I'll do before running out of material? The writing in this issue was mostly done ages ago, a sign of declining creativity. If I ever write a piece about my favourite type of animal please feel free to drive a screwdriver into my frontal lobe. I can hear the footsteps of writers block and diminishing returns. Early morning traffic is audible, as is the cry of the fishmongers...

Not too much has happened since the last issue. The main thing of note is getting it together with PERSPEX FLESH. It's been nice to re-accustom myself with the unreliability of valve guitar heads and the pleasures of repeatedly breaking strings. I've also been again reminded that it's much easier to write about and appreciate good music than it is to create it...

I've been reading a few other recent zines lately and I've learnt a few things: 1) If you're writing about this type of music, you should be flippant and generally lethargic, like you don't really give a shit but go to all the effort of making and printing a zine anyway. 2) You should use catchy messageboard coded terms so that you don't actually have to risk saying anything about anything. BONZER! 3) You should hint at how you probably won't be listening to punk in a couple of years (or even any music intently) because you're burnt out, or because things aren't how they used to be, or because things were good 6 months ago but not now. Such a lack of perspective is palpable and I hope to harness it.

About the content. I've interviewed GLAM because they're still one of Spain's hottest hardcore offerings, RATIONAL ANIMALS because they released one of my favourite LPs last year, GUN OUTFIT because they're one of the best current bands in any genre, and THE LOWEST FORM as a key example of why hardcore in the UK is actually good right now. Again, all of the reviews are generally positive. My only excuse is that I tend not to buy records I don't think I'll like, and I've only reviewed things I own (as an aside, I did recently buy the CRIMINAL CODE 7" based on a distro description and was utterly disappointed. Lesson learnt). Saying that, one of my irrational concerns is printing something and then disagreeing with it later on, praising a record I end up hating (or vice versa). Ridiculously narcissistic but there you go. Flow my tears, the zine-writer said.

I promised in the last issue that your fingers wouldn't be so ink stained this time round, but it turns out they would be, so I've decided to incorporate this as a selling point. More authentic or something. Buy now and watch the words fade over the years, random letters disappear before your eyes. Have fun trying to decipher what I really thought about a record you can't remember hearing in a decade's time.

I'm excited about the impending MECHT MENSCH discography coming out, and the recent reissue of DICKS Kill From The Heart helped fill an aching hole for the time being (until I stumble on an original). Now all we need is a repress of TAR BABIES Face The Music and we'll be set, ready to face death with the knowledge that we own records we like. Something to compete with the flocks and their promise of an afterlife (leave the reissue-vs-original debate in the bedroom, along with those back issues of Heart Attack you pretend to hate).

Since the last issue the best new film I watched was Polanski's CARNAGE, the best old film I watched was THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE, the best books I read were JG Ballard's The Drowned World and Davis Goodis's Down There, and the best bands I saw live were TOTAL CONTROL, ELECTRIC WIZARD, DRUNK IN HELL, BELGRADO and SUDOR.

STIGGGGGMMMMMAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Does Stigma really play shows without plugging in his guitar, or was that just a rumour? If true, when did it first happen? Did he lose his mind in the early '90s, between *One Voice* and **AGNOSTIC FRONT'S** return as a streetpunk mishap? (Have they gone back to metalcore nowadays? Jesus...)

Or is the reality that his playing was just so incredible on *Victim In Pain*

that he realised he'd never be able to meet or surpass it again, so he gave up altogether? Will his neglected guitar cables form a super-group with other abandoned pieces of musical equipment belonging to second-tier NYHC bands? Perhaps the guitar tuner from **DOWN LOW** or the tremolo arm from **SUB ZERO**?

Still, Stigma wrote great riffs early on, the kind that helped define what makes hardcore a singular musical style *in and of itself*; music that essentially appeals only to true fans of the genre rather than casual musos who might like, say, **BAD BRAINS** but not **NEGATIVE APPROACH...**

Can you imagine members of **AF** being in any other type of band!? It's their single-minded hardcore approach that matters, perfected in a way that (for a time) avoided cartoon parody. They crystallized the frustration and transgressive power of a music style alien to both 'sophisticated' punks of the art schools and their (sometimes corresponding) glue sniffing drop-outs. Their early records epitomise hardcore at its crudest. In other words, at its best. And in contrast to the slow 'sophisticating' progression of bands in other cities like DC, **AGNOSTIC FRONT** showed no signs of 'maturity' as the early '80s flashed by. Inner-city rumblings in contrast to suburban angst or conceited fantasies. Sure, the quality of their music dropped fast, but I still respect their approach.

I mean Brian Baker was going to join **REM** on the mid '80s! Can you imagine Stigma being asked!?

Still, it might have been interesting if rather than embrace metal in the mid '80s, **AF** turned towards the hard rock or psychedelic tendencies of the output of a label like **SST** instead (let's not forget members of early NY hardcore band **MISGUIDED** went onto form **DAS DAMEN**, for better or worse). I don't doubt the musical talents behind those early records.

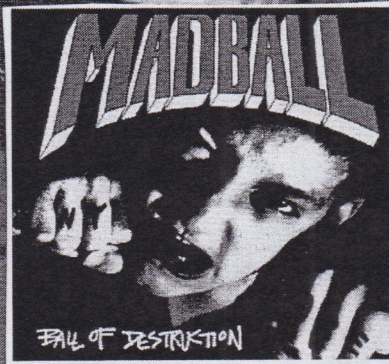


I just wonder if it could have been channelled slightly differently later on, rather than latching onto other emerging musical trends (from crossover onwards). I'll just keep fantasising...

I'd love for the **AGNOSTIC FRONT** *Victim In Pain*-era practice sessions to be given the proper vinyl reissue treatment, as found on that Grand Theft Audio *Raw Unleashed* CD (although I hear the GTA guy is a rival to Ginn in terms of clamping down on people violating copyright he may or may not own). The versions of 'Blind Justice', 'Traitor', 'Crucified' and 'United Blood' are especially revelatory. Thick walls will not protect my neighbours. I need to track down the LP bootleg (PACO?)

Everyone needs to see the '86 **AGNOSTIC FRONT** cable-access performance to promote the censored reissue of *VIP*, featuring Roger lip-syncing and pretending to play guitar with a cassette playing in the background. What's perhaps funnier than the video itself is the response of pathetic modern hardcore tough-guys on the internet, crying about how lame it is because it ruins their fetish-fantasy image of NYHC...

Fucking *Victim In Pain*. Expect an article about that masterpiece in a future issue. And while I'm at it, *Ball Of Destruction* has been getting serious revisits lately.



EVERYBODY

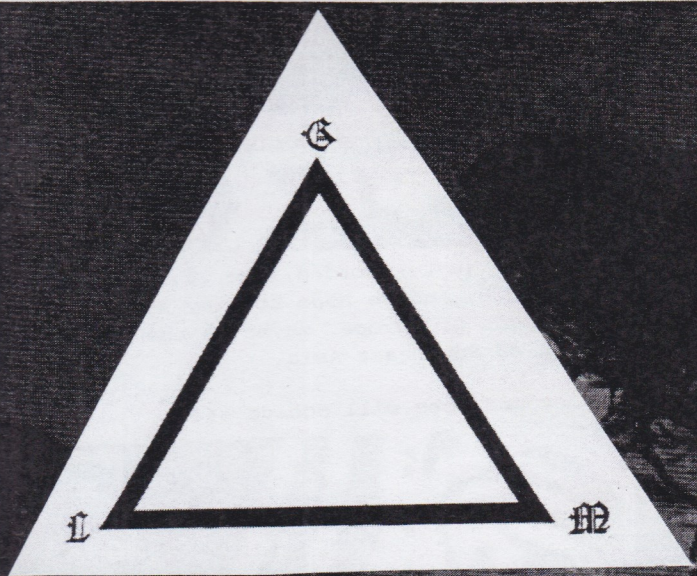
THINKS

I'M

A

SCUM





Barcelona's GLAM are rightly one of the most talked about Spanish hardcore bands of recent years, part of the wave of great bands that suddenly appeared to shame the rest of contemporary Europe's hardcore output. I asked Dani a few questions after being blown away (twice) when I saw them live at the 1 in 12 Club in Bradford.

1. Explain a bit of the background to how GLAM started? Did you all know each other beforehand?

Dani: We started on January 2010. We've known each other for a bunch of years. Some of us since childhood.

2. What were the main bands that inspired GLAM'S sound when starting out? Did you do any covers to get used to playing together?

Dani: We listen to a lot of different stuff and we love hardcore from around the world. Here's a list of bands we love and which inspired us for sure.

Bands from the States like: ANTIDOTE, THE ABUSED, ARTIFICIAL PEACE, SOA, SSD, URBAN WASTE, VOID, SIEGE.

Bands from Japan like: KURO, ZOOU, GAUZE, GAI, CONFUSE.

Bands from Europe: DISCHARGE, CHEETAH CHROME, MOTHERFUCKERS, RUDIMENTARY PENI, BOMBANDFALL, MOB 47.

And we're also influenced by black metal stuff like HELLHAMMER, MAYHEM, DARKTHRONE, BURZUM, BATHORY, VENOM.

3. Do you consider yourselves as a 'D-beat' band, or do you find that the label limiting? What do you think about this?

Dani: Absolutely not, we never played 'D-beat', we just do simple and fast hardcore. We know that some people described us like a D-beat band, but we don't know why.

Some of our riffs perhaps have some DISCHARGE influence, but our beat is just fast hardcore.

4. Some of you guys were in ÜBER, right? I've never actually heard that band, how did it differ from GLAM?

Dani: Yes, 3 of us played in ÜBER. Ramon, Roca and Dani. ÜBER was totally simple snotty punk with no distortion. We released 3 7"s and a couple of tapes.

5. What did you think of the UK when you've been over? Had any of you previously toured here in other bands? In what ways do you think it differs from Spain (both in terms of 'the scene' and in general)? Does our food deserve the awful reputation it gets on the continent?

Dani: I was playing bass in HORRÖR, they tried to tour around UK like 4 years ago but were banned at the border. So with GLAM it's the first time we've played in UK.

We really enjoyed our gigs in UK, especially the last one at Means To An End Fest in Bradford last year.

I think you have a really good scene and places for playing, a lot of bands and people involved in the hardcore punk movement since a lot of years ago. The only thing we miss is 'free bar' at the venues, haha.

English food is not our favourite, but at least it's not super spicy like in some European cities. We're not used to that torture. We're Spanish not Mexicans, haha.





8. What's next for GLAM?

Dani: We just recorded like 10 new songs for a MLP. And we hope to play some shows out of Europe, maybe in the U.S, Japan or Southeast Asia.

Money and jobs will decide it!



6. There's been a resurgence of interest in Spanish hardcore in the last few years. Bands that I'm sure you'd already have been familiar with have only recently reached the ears of a lot of folks in the US, UK and elsewhere. Why do you think this is? And what underrated classic Spanish records are your favourites?

Dani: It's true that in the last years a lot of interesting Spanish bands showed up, we're really happy that people from far places get interested in our scene. Some magazines and labels are helping a lot with that.

We used to have tons of good punk and hardcore bands since the '80's.

A lot of young people are doing interesting stuff right now, not like some years ago, when the 'NeoCrust' trend was really deep here, there were a lot of bands doing the same boring stuff.

Some amazing Spanish punk bands that maybe are underrated:

QLOAQA LETAL, PANADERIA BOLLERIA NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL CARMEN, ESKUPITAJO, TOREROS AFTER OLÉ, MG15, TDK, HHH, ANTIDOGMATIKSS, IV REICH, KANGRENA, FRENOPATICSS, ULTIMATUM and more that we forget right know.

7. How is the Spanish scene as of 2012? Does it vary from region to region?

Dani: I think we've a good scene right now, a lot of people doing new bands, new collectives to organize shows, people driving for bands.

And new kids getting involved in it. So I'm optimistic with Spanish hardcore punk's future.

There are a lot of cool places to play. Especially in Basque Country, Valencia, Madrid and Barcelona.

9. When did you first get into punk? Do you remember the first record you heard and first show you attended? Cast your mind back, do you remember what you felt towards punk upon discovering it? How have these feelings changed?

Dani: I think the first punk record I heard was Inadaptados from CICATRIZ. I remember listening to it like 10 times every day, then I got really interested in punk music and I started to reach for different bands. Finally I found a punk program in an anarchist radio of Barcelona and I discovered a lot of punk and hardcore bands.

I can't remember the first gig I went, but all those first ones were really intensive for me.



THE
END



A certified favourite of **DARKTHRONE'S** Fenriz, **PUKE'S** *Back to the Stoneage* LP is a solid Swedish hardcore gem from 1987 that deserves more recognition. It sounds like the great **PURE HATE** 7" mixed with the **ANTI-CIMEX** 12", with a peculiar melodic and metallic edge that reminds me of Norway's **SO MUCH HATE**. Fast, aggressive and memorable. And it's not laboured with bad jokes like the cover might suggest. Fuck, maybe if it had a different cover it'd be better regarded?

'SPACE ROCK'

After writing about **HAWKWIND** in the last issue, I've been thinking about 'space rock' and another touchstone in this loosely defined genre, **SPACEMEN 3**. Now, I couldn't care less about most bands mining this territory nowadays, but **SPACEMEN 3** put out some staggering records that can't be undermined by the 'hipster' credibility they may or may not still have. Yes their lyrics are cringe-worthy, they muse on Jesus too much and their originality has been shrouded by innumerable copycats. They're also one of the few bands I write about in this zine whose musical lineage can't be traced back to either **DISCHARGE**, **BLACK FLAG** or **BAD BRAINS**. But still, what a band.

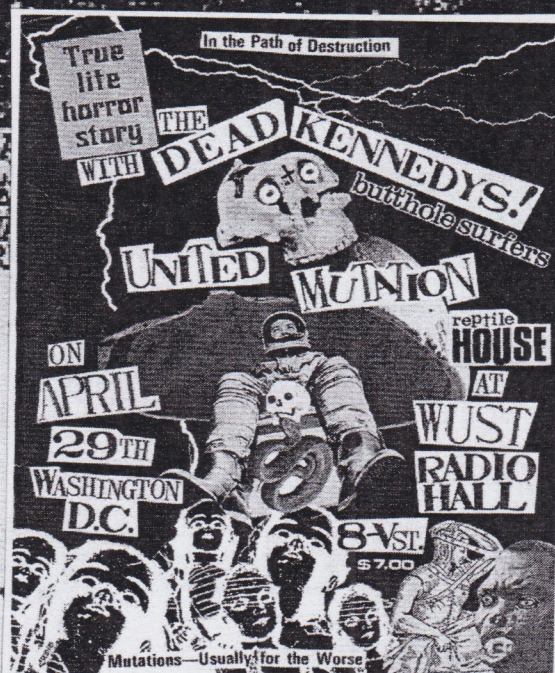
WAD'S NO FAIRYTALE GOVERNMENT

For a few years I've really loved *The Perfect Prescription*, a record suggested to me by Paul from **MOB RULES** on the back of talking about **VEE DEE**, both bands sharing a 'vibe' if not sounding much alike (although the '60s influences on both are clear and overlapping). But only recently have I gotten into the debut, *Sound of Confusion*, and it's a real revelation. It's a record grounded in the hypnotic and repetitive sounds of bands like **HAWKWIND**, **VELVET UNDERGROUND** and **THE STOOGES**, the latter influence showing through in their cover of 'Little Doll' but also in the 'TV Eye' echoes (rip-off or 'homage'?) in 'O.D. Catastrophe'. The proto-shoegaze elements are also way less prominent here, the whole record coming from a more fuzzy, almost aggressive place than their

'cerebral' later records. In other words, there's still a certain garage energy to it. It's psychedelic without relying on swirling effects or fairytale mumbling, droney but still poppy, and ambient enough for space cruising while still solidly within the idiom of rock music. And it's a record clearly made by awkward people with a ridiculously 'serious' exterior and purpose, evidenced by any chair-fidgeting interview you see from the time and the eventual supercilious character of their later projects (too gospel, sorry). The fact that they were all about alienating the audience comes through loud and clear; a sit-down-and-play, anti-dance, anti-singalong approach that unites them with a million noise projects that you stand outside for. But its pretensions are no problem for me, and they're much easier to deal with on the band's earliest records, which retain enough disorientating guitar-based repetition and reverb to please any fan of fucked up music. As an aside, with the way hardcore trends are moving I wouldn't be surprised if we saw bands blending space rock with creepy crawl breakdowns in a couple of months. I mean shoegaze has already been incorporated in the gluttonous hardcore culture industry, to disappointing affect all round...

It might be weird to write a high school style review of a record that came out about 25 years ago. I just felt like spreading some love for a band that I see as the more 'approachable' flipside of '80s psychedelia, the aggressive reflection in the mirror of **FLIPPER**, **BUTTHOLE SURFERS** and company. It's music that I enjoy even if I never got into it as a teenager, and it's music that strangely helps sooth my worsening tinnitus.

I'd love to know what my 14 year old self would think about me listening to so much 'drug music'. He'd probably put on **JUDGE** and sulk. What a fucking loser.



As an aside, is there anything worse than people who say they don't like the **GERMS** because they don't like music made by 'junkies'? People caring more about who makes music than the music itself. Pathetic.

The End.

ART OF THE HARDCORE COMP

I feel that compilations are perhaps neglected by the average hardcore fan. Is it an inability to deal with their quality oscillation, to take the rough with the smooth? Or is it due to the fact that they were usually pressed in relatively large quantities and so aren't as rare as other records? Whatever it might be, I think comps deserve their due.

What I love about them is that they exist as capsules that preserve what was happening in a particular place at a particular time, summing up whole scenes better than any retrospective books or documentaries could ever hope to (the upcoming Boston hardcore film *All Ages* will undoubtedly disappoint). But beyond regional comps, the best international ones deserve their reputation too: *Cleanse the Bacteria*, *Welcome to 1984*, the BCT cassette tapes, all releases that brought 'exotic' international punk to the ears of people who had never left Wisconsin/Bradford/Berlin...

Comps also gave bands who might otherwise be completely forgotten a place in music's marginal history. Bands who recorded or released little to nothing else got a chance to shine, like **AUTISTIC BEHAVIOUR** on *Get Off My Back*, pre-**SHEER TERROR** killers **FATHEAD SURBURBIA** on *Big City Aint Too Pretty* (I NEED to hear the rest of *The Masses* demo), or **STILLBORN CHRISTIANS** on *Why Are We Here?* (one of my favourite comps). And how about pre-**BL'AST** ragers **M.A.D.** on *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*? I could go on...

But my tolerance for bad music also seems to get much higher with comps. I find myself liking songs by bands I generally dislike (i.e. **SOCIAL DISTORTION'S** cuts on *Hell Comes to Your House*, or **BOLD'S** 'Wise Up' on *The Way It Is*), and I can enjoy most bands on any volume of *We Got Power* (well...just about). There's something about the format that makes me more forgiving, more willing to go along for the ride; to drop weightlessly into passive enjoyment like a baby falling into quicksand.

Here's a brief overview of my favourite comps from 4 specific areas, covering records I physically own and therefore listen to on a more regular basis. I'm really only scratching the surface. I could equally have written about DC, the Midwest, the UK, or whatever, but there's only so much space. Saying that, I will just give a mention to 1985's *They Pelted Us With Rocks and Garbage*, a really underrated Clevo ripper compiling the best punk, post-punk and hardcore from the region at that specific moment in time: **SPIKE IN VAIN**, **THE GUNS**, **OFFBEATS** and loads of bands you've never heard of but who are actually (mostly) great. And you can get it for much cheaper than the equally great *New Hope* comp.

California

Tales from the Golden State.



American Youth Report: Found at a local record shop in my early teens, this made a pretty big impact. The photos were enough to attract any teenage punk, from the wasted kid with the spray-painted shirt on the back cover to the 'lobotomy' tattooed head on the front. I already knew a few of the bands (**TSOL**, **BAD RELIGION**) but it was the other stuff that really broke through, i.e. **LEGAL WEAPON'S** best song 'Pow Pow', a **FLESHEATERS** favourite 'Pony Dress', and one of **RED CROSS'S** best cuts that wasn't on *Born Innocent*, 'Notes & Chords Mean Nothing To Me'. The shared vibes of the LA bands shine through, each sounding different but with unifying elements that are hard to pin down (A vaguely irritating accent? A love of Shasta soda? A tendency towards eye make-up?) They all have a manic and youthful energy, defined not by speed but by memorable song-writing, with more than a hint of theatrics and melodrama. This record really sums up non-SST Californian hardcore for me, its diversity highlighting the myriad 'non-punk' influences that are at play ('60s garage, '70s glam, etc). At the same time, so much of it is primal and amateur in the best possible way. I recently watched David Markey's *Slog Movie* and was reminded just how young a lot of the people involved in this scene really were (with oddball older guys like **FLESHEATERS** cruising about). This remains an excellent documentation of that scene, a worthy 'youth report' of something you and I had no experience of...



RIVIERA PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS



Honourable mention also to *Hell Comes to Your House*, another California favourite that's way less goth than people say, despite the photos on the insert. A lot of the bands would go on to make overproduced mediocre records (**45 GRAVE**) or just plain shit ones (**SOCIAL DISTORTION**) but here they were in their prime. Again, **RED CROSS** and **100 FLOWERS** are highlights, along with **LEGAL WEAPON**, **MODERN WARFARE** and early **CHRISTIAN DEATH** (the first stuff recorded when Rikk Agnew joined).

MAN • FAITH Japan Eastern Promises or Distorted Orientalism FROM IGNORANCE

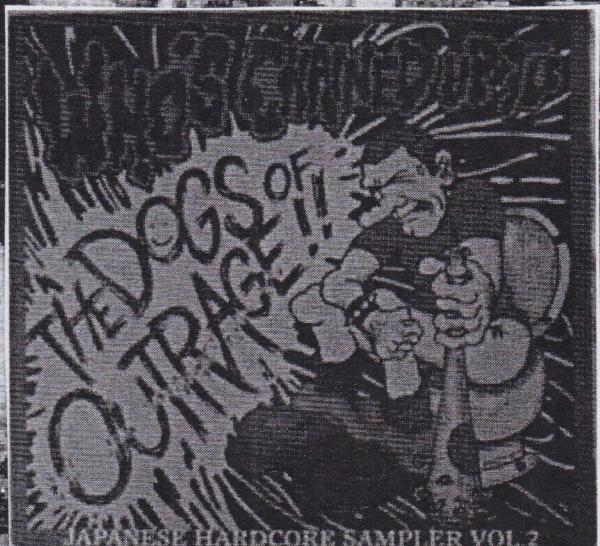
Chunks/Life Is Ugly So Why Not Kill Yourself:

Both of these record cover similar ground, the earlier days of the scene surrounding SST and affiliated labels (like New Alliance, ran by **MINUTEMEN** and friends, later sold to SST after Boon's death). While both *Blasting Concept* volumes are essential SST archival gems (the Scott Reagers version of 'Look Behind You' by **SAINT VITUS** on vol II being a major standout), *Chunks* and *Life Is Ugly* offer up both familiar and less familiar fare. They catch a moment in time when a small scene of punk bands were getting creative, expanding on and twisting a blueprint for better or for worse. On *Chunks* you get a blasting Spot-produced soundtrack to match its great Pettibon artwork that's even more abstract than usual. It features a classic early **DESCENDENTS** song that hints at the direction they'd take later on, an admittedly minor **FLAG** cut ('Machine'), and one of **MINUTEMEN'S** more raging moments ('Clocks'). You also get a great **CHIEFS** song that isn't on their EP (as featured on *Killed By Death* #2), and the incredible 'Sick and Crazy' by LA's **THE STAINS**, proving why their **FLAG**-esque metallic crunch deserves the proper reissue it's supposed to be getting. It also features **SACCHARINE TRUST'S** 'Christmas Cry', the kind of beatnik-vibing, dirgey, alienating song that defines them (possibly my second favourite SST band after **FLAG**. A bold claim I know. As an aside, check out **SONIC YOUTH'S** worthwhile cover of 'I Am Right'). Moving onto *Life Is Ugly*, on New Underground. On side A (the 'hardcore' side) you get an early **RED CROSS** song 'Rich Brat', from around the time of the first EP, and some generic hardcore cuts by bands like **ANTI** (which featured Greg Kail who ran New Underground) and **ILL WILL**, which are perfectly serviceable. On side B (the 'arty' side), you get classic one-offs by **MINUTEMEN**, **URINALS** and **100 FLOWERS**, ending with one of **SACCHARINE TRUST'S** best and most hardcore non-album songs, 'Disillusion Fool'. Just wonderful music.



Thrash Till Death (1986): I imagine this was the first Japanese hardcore record that a lot of people outside of Japan would have heard in the '80s, being reissued a year after its original release by that perpetual drawer of skulls Pushead (while a lot of is made of the **GAUZE '96** US tour in opening up 'Western' listeners to Japanese hardcore, I can't help wonder if the large presses of records like this and the one discussed below show an already significant interest?) **SYSTEMATIC DEATH'S** song 'Jap Gate' seems appropriate, this record being a key 'discursive initiator' in opening up this kind of music to the world. The appeal of ridiculously powerful wimp-crushing hardcore and broken English has hardly dissipated since ('Be Dead Gone Annie'!). I'm sure this record helped establish the names of all 4 bands (**GAUZE**, **SYSTEMATIC DEATH**, **LIP CREAM** and **OUTO**), and with good reason. The blaring **GAUZE** songs are easily amongst their best ('Screw' being a personal favourite), and while the other bands did their best work elsewhere, the whole thing is still a great introduction.

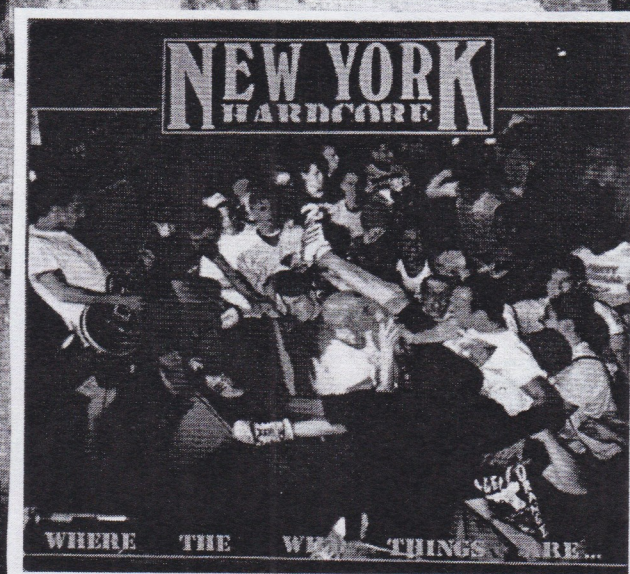
A Farewell to Arms (1986): Originally released on Selfish in '86, this was soon reissued on Nuclear Blast, perhaps reflecting the fact that the pummelling power of Japanese hardcore appealed to Euro metalheads who already had a taste for brutality thanks to **HELLHAMMER** etc. It kicks off with more **LIP CREAM** hits, including the unstoppable 'Kill Ugly Cop', and then moves onto **OUTO**, who really kill it on here with the **DISORDER** influence on full display (I...LIKE...COLLLAAAA). **GASTUNK** up next with 2 of their best 'rollicking' (I hate that word but it's appropriate here) melodic and metallic cuts. The reverb-drenched solo in 'The Eyes' is fucking PERFECT. On the flip you get 4 **GAUZE** favourites with some of the best production (that bass sound!), including the all-time classic 'Pressing On'. Then the most metal band of the lot, the monstrous **GHOUL**, sounding like **GISM** covering **METALLICA**. We finish with **THE EXECUTE** and their brand of catchy and anthemic hardcore... I just wonder what Hemingway would have made of it all?



Who's Chained Up To the Dogs of Outrage (1991): Well, who *is* chained up to the dogs of outrage? A question that remains unanswered, the cover drawing of a guy taking a shit offering no clues. Strangely, this was the first Japanese punk comp I ever heard, passed down from my sister's then-boyfriend when I was a teenager. It remains a favourite, the kind of second-tier Japanese hardcore comp that doesn't demand much money but which provides solid headbang material for the discerning listener who goes beyond just the Big G's (**GISM/GAUZE**) or other usual suspects. The **RUSTLER** and **JUNTESS** tracks alone make it worthwhile, both playing solid and driving Japanese hardcore that's comparable to **DEATHSIDE** (if you don't have them, get the **JUNTESS 7"s NOW**). **BANISH ARMS** are probably the weakest of the lot but still worthwhile. As an aside, seeing the height of those mohawks on the back-cover blew my mind as a kid. I envisaged a nation of mutated nuclear super punks, the power of the music contained within further cementing this idea...

New York New York's Alright If You Like...

The Way It Is: A record I enjoyed more as a teenager, I put this on the other day and was reminded of what a powerhouse it is. Wall-to-wall second (or third?) wave NYHC classics mostly from the Revelation roster, including **WARZONE'S** 'As One', **YOUTH OF TODAY'S** 'Together', and my 2 favourite **SIDE BY SIDE** songs (with no mention of any birds or any feathers). It was also the first place I heard **BREAKDOWN'S** 'Sick People', a game-changer for sure. I even like the **NAUSEA** songs, despite slugging them off elsewhere in this issue. Sorry guys, don't sacrifice me to your mooky cybergod. Say what you like about Revelation, this record was one of their high points.



Where The Wild Things Are (1989): Covering the less clean-cut side of late '80s NY hardcore (but separate from ABC No Rio), this is another favourite. The facts that it has 2 **LIFES BLOOD** songs that weren't on *Defiance* and it was the only vinyl appearance of **RAW DEAL** before the name change should be reasons enough to kill a small child and steal his piggybank to own this. Thuggish burly hardcore at its best, represented by the cover photo of the Koller brothers and other NYHC 'celebs' singing along to **RAW DEAL**, and the shot of a passed out Paul Bearer on the back. The A-side is of course the best, containing **LIFES BLOOD**, **RAW DEAL**, **OUTBURST** (including The fucking Hardway) and **BREAKDOWN**. The lowest points are the **MAXIMUM PENALTY** and **UPPERCUT** songs, but I even like them to a degree. **SHEER TERROR** provide 2 of their slower dirges (with ridiculously un-straight-edge lyrics - how many other bands were singing about drowning in flagons!?) reminding you of just how much they borrowed from **CELTIC FROST**, even in guitar tone. If you only own 1 record of this style, this should be it. A reckoning force for sure. That is, until **GORILLA BISCUITS** close the record with their awful and embarrassing **BUZZCOCKS** cover. Lift the stylus before that one...

MURDERS



Murders Among Us (1990): Speaking of ABC No Rio, this is a great record that covers part of that scene's germination, containing 2 classic songs each by **BORN AGAINST** and **LIFES BLOOD**, a song I quite like by **NAUSEA** (they were only good on comps it seems), and probably the best **ABSOLUTION** song they ever wrote, 'Dead and Gone' (fact of the day: The singer's dad, Marion Brown, was a jazz player who plays on John Coltrane's excellent *Ascension*). 4 songs, no waste, all from a scene that had zero problem with men having ponytails... You all know this record and you all love it, so I'll stop there.

Boston

Don't Spike the Tea Party.

This is Boston Not LA: One of the best compilations ever, no doubt about that, and a defining moment in US hardcore. It's essentially like a load of great 7"s combined, with **JERRY'S KIDS**, **GANG GREEN** and **THE FREEZE** all providing some of their best material. It feels somewhat redundant to describe these bands if you're already reading this zine, so I'll keep it brief. **THE FU'S** exhibit a bunch of early ragers that only hint at how good the LPs would be, and **PROLETARIAT'S** songs similarly pale in comparison to their later stuff (*Soma Holiday* especially, one of the best US post-punk LPs). Add in briefer appearances from **GROINOIDS** (pre-**KILSLUG**) and **DECADENCE** (with the one-off hardcore novelty classic 'Slam') and there you have it. A record that serves as a measuring stick for high quality high-school hardcore, each band with an unhinged and infectious energy that's hard to deny. If ever the word obligatory has been more appropriate...

Bands That Could Be God (1984): A great little collection, its circulation recently increased due to the discovery of some sealed stock copies. It's a record that offers an alternative view of the Boston scene, away from both the frustrated testosterone of the X Claim bands or the snotty irreverence of **GANG GREEN** or **THE FREEZE**. The whole thing's clearly coming from more of a college/art-school angle, and that's no criticism. The main attractions are the 2 non-7" **DEEP WOUND** songs, including the absolute stomper 'Time To Stand', which I've always really wanted to cover. The other main hardcore highlight is **THE OUTPATIENTS** featuring **DEEP WOUND'S** bass player, whose demo *Painkiller* are due to reissue soon. I always thought they sound kind of like **BATTALION OF SAINTS**, i.e. fucking great. The rest is a little more varied, with the kind of post-punk/indie/hardcore merge acts that in some ways laid the groundwork for the SST-through-grunge years that were just around the corner. **MOVING TARGETS** offer a few of their best **DU/BURMA**-core songs that weren't on *Burning In Water* (really the only album of theirs you need), **SORRY** provide their excellent DC-style melodic hardcore, **BUSTED STATUES** get all moody with repetitive **JOY DIVISION**-style bass riffs to good effect, **SALEM 66** echo bands like **DOLLY MIXTURE** but with a not-so-good singer, and **FLIES** do a song that's like a lackadaisical **RED CROSS**. **CHRISTMAS** and **BEANBAG** are both kind of irritating, but neither so much to spoil things. Only **DEEP WOUND** came close to being God, but the rest is worth your time.

Bands that Could be God

Beanbag Busted Statues Christmas Deep Wound The Flies
Moving Targets The Outpatients Salem 66 Sorry



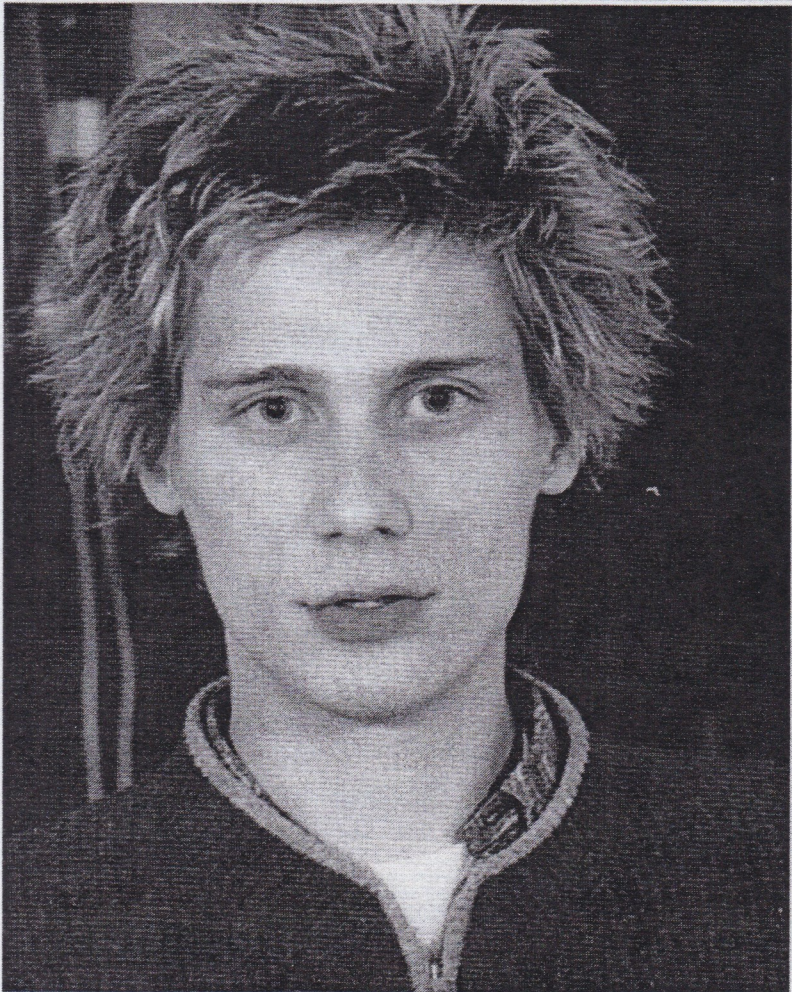
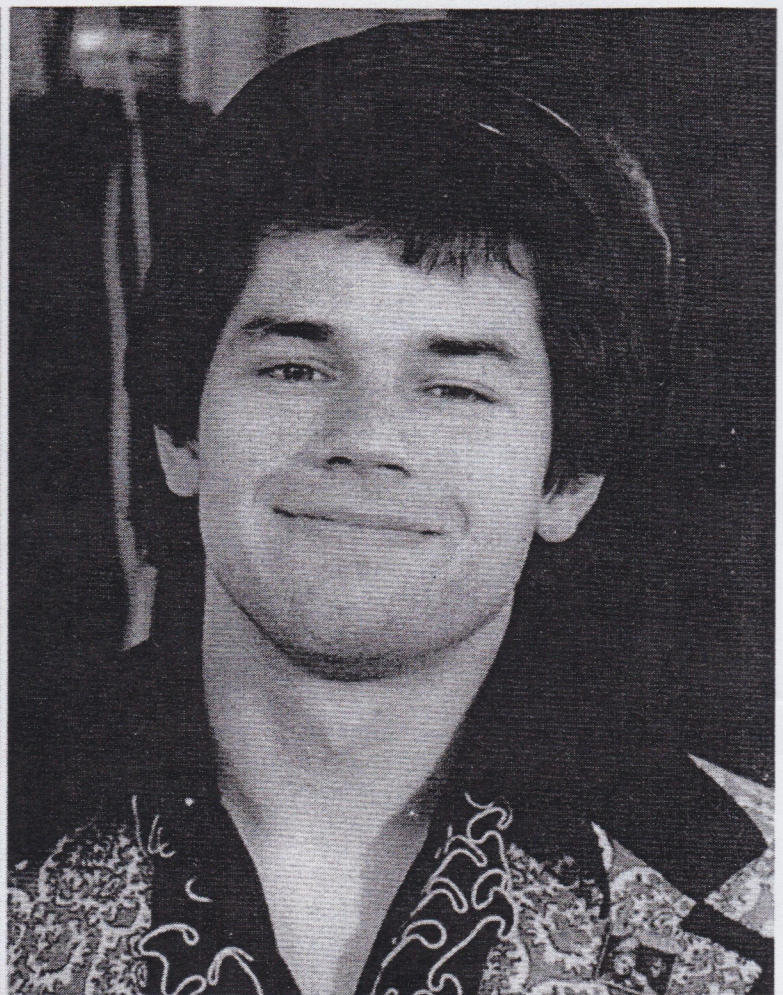
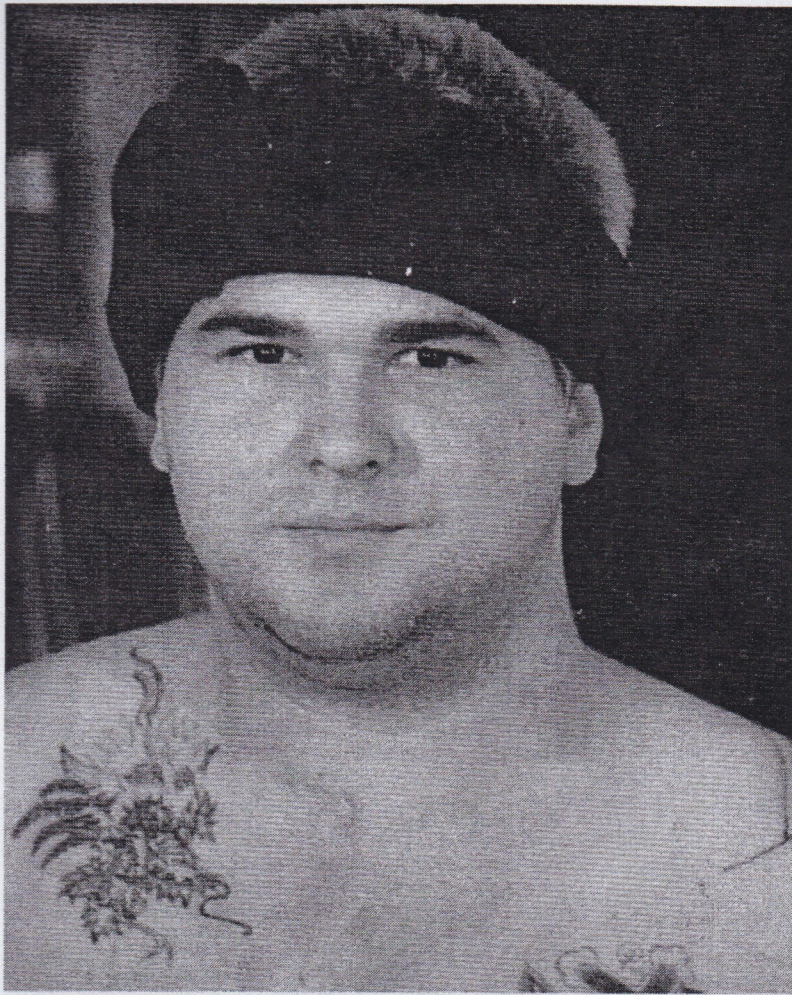
The CONFLICT Compilation

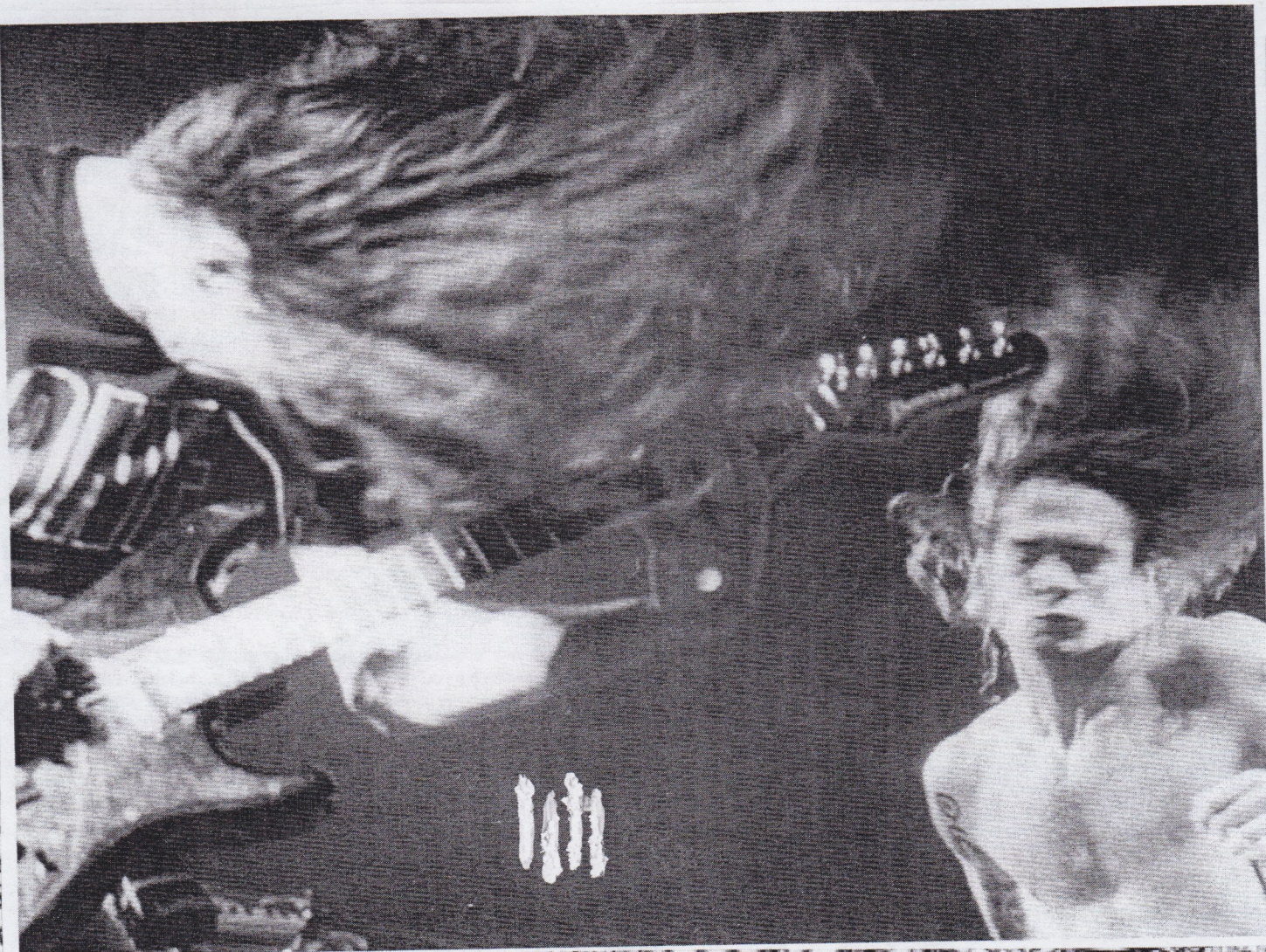
And for the hell of it, here are some of my favourite comps in other genres:

Chocolate Soup for Diabetics (UK freakbeat/garage goodness, including **THE MISUNDERSTOOD'S** classic 'Children of the Sun', incidentally the song my dad first learned to play on the guitar in the '60s. He might be lying/losing it as he can't play guitar)

Metal for Muthas (NWOBHM comp, highlights being **ANGEL WITCH**, early **MAIDEN** and fucking **SLEDGEHAMMER!**)

Nuggets Vols 1 and 2 (Canonical '60s garage. Obligatory for fans of having ears to hear with) 11





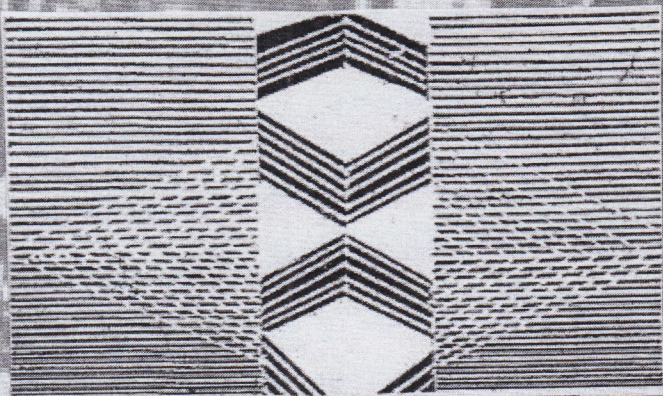
I'm going to put it out there that *In My Head* is my absolute favourite **BLACK FLAG** record. Marginally perhaps, but it just has a vibe unlike any of the others that perfectly captures what late **FLAG** was all about.

Both serious-minded and cynically sarcastic, *In My Head* combines twisted punk with a hard-rock sensibility to cement what are, in my mind, serious high watermarks of '80s music (not to denigrate any of the other albums. **FLAG** really were the best rock band of the decade without competition, not to mention releasing one of punk's best 7"s at the end of the decade before). The title song is a goddamn sensual rallying cry, one amongst many on the record that you can jam in your head just by thinking of the title. Songs like 'White Hot' have that patented built-in tension, while 'I'm The One' has a driving, thrusting rhythm powered by Stevenson's signature lurching swing that never lets up. Absolute trademark power. Like most **FLAG** you remember the twisting guitar and bass lines as much as the lyrics, realising how 'catchy' the band really is. The record's also full of strange timings and stranger production touches that make it feel somewhat 'new' every time you listen to it, a reflection perhaps of the 'out there' rock influences at play (was Ginn into **LES RALLIZES DENUDES**?) Only **BL'AST'S** *Take A Manic Ride* has a similar effect on me. I've said it before, but 'Society's Tease' is a favourite, with lyrics that are way less ridiculous than they might seem at first (but what exactly is it about? A sly swipe at misogynistic culture or a twisted endorsement of it?) It also includes one of my favourite Ginn guitar breaks, drenched in reverb and soaring high in a way that reminds me of Dr. Know's best work.

I've heard that this is as close to a Ginn solo album that **FLAG** ever got, originally envisaged as such. It sure beats anything **GONE** produced (even though I like their first 2 LPs). I think if the line-up had sustained for the '86 tour (without the inclusion of last minute heshier ringers) those shows might be remembered differently, each song from this honed each night to powerhouse perfection.

In My Head was actually the second **FLAG** album I heard after getting into *Damaged*, so perhaps that partially explains its exalted place in my mind. No music I'd heard previously had prepared me for it.

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GUN OUTFIT

Olympia's GUN OUTFIT are one of my favourite current bands, hands down. I asked Dylan a few questions, in the hope he could answer between printing tie-die t-shirts and making homemade stoner movies

1. When and how did GUN OUTFIT come together? Did you know each other beforehand? Have you ever lived together? What was the initial intention behind the band?

Dylan: We started playing Neil Young covers, just Carrie and I. Neither of us could play guitar (I had been playing drums in WHITE BOSS and singing in bands for a while) so I guess the initial intention was to get better at guitar, and to play a kind of music that I felt wasn't being played with any integrity at the time. I had been completely in the hardcore scene and I must admit it was kind of appealing to play 'weak' sounding music that bummed out my friends and made me appear incompetent and frail - this was before I realized that the music world is a thorough pose, and I approached music with a positivity that has appeared naive numerous times in hindsight. Reuben joined relatively soon after that, we got way more punk again with drums. He quit when it became clear he had overextended himself, playing in a lot of bands that all wanted to be 'full time'. Daniel's been great and we've become much more of a freedom rock band since he joined.

We've never lived together, but pretty much. We are all great friends.

2. What are the main bands you all loved when starting out, and did their influences inform your sound? I find it hard asking bands 'what are your influences', especially when it's often clear to the listener to pick up on, but I'm interested in what kind of thing you were going for. Do you think you have your own sound?

Dylan: Well, folk/country artists like Neil Young, Lucinda Williams, Townes Van Zandt, Gene Clark, Bob Dylan etc - we were all big fans of this stuff when we started. Shit everyone seems to like. I can tell you that bands like RELATIVELY CLEAN RIVERS, ANONYMOUS, HENDRIX, ZZ TOP, RORY GALAGHER, GREAT SOCIETY, THE CLEAN and a few more from the '80s are bands we listen to much more than bands from the '90's. Melodic, song-oriented music with good lyrics, usually in

the downer vibe. Rural? Carrie and I both grew up in the country, we are hicks who smoke a lot of marijuana, with some 'artist' pretensions. We get compared to SONIC YOUTH and DINOSAUR JR a lot, and I can see why but we definitely don't want to sound like those bands; we keep our songs relatively short. Like all humans, we are bumbling and groping frantically around on earth, and it seems more embarrassing to attempt to hide our foolishness behind thin veils of bravura and virtuosity than to openly display it. This bums people out, because they want fantasy in music, which is why they love metal and hip hop and the vast majority of rock and roll.

We have our own sound. We have avoided playing with a bass player for a long time because we were wary of people nestling into a comforting 'groove' and checking into rock memory hotel. It's funny when we play shows; people want to rock out but often it's too shrill or weird or clean for them to do it. But the fact that Carrie and I learned to play guitar together by jamming for six years definitely gives us a unique rapport, if nothing else. We've actually just added a bass player, Anton, and that's exciting, because it lets Carrie and I get way more sparse.

3. Describe Olympia to an English guy who's never been across the Atlantic. Were you all born in the area? What frame of references might I have to understand it, besides the grunge connection and the musical goings-on of the last few years? Can you think of any good films made locally? And what are the best local eats?

Dylan: Olympia is not a real city. It's a small town in which you slowly get to know every disgusting detail about every person you may or may not have interest in knowing. Music is hegemonic amongst the arts - great visual artists only get attention for various flier art they might do. A very west-coast hippy type town in which there is a processional of a great number of creative earth worshippers dancing along the main street in homemade animal costumes every year. Once you have a job (which is the greatest challenge in a town so small) life is extremely easy... I pay 125 a month in rent, work two days a week, get fed exotic drugs on grimy kitchenware etc. It is extremely boring after a while; many who have been living here for ten or more years develop addiction problems. Carrie grew up here, Daniel grew up outside of Boston and I grew up in Carnation, Washington which is a much smaller town an hour and a half NE.



There is no good food in Olympia. I would say Oldschool Pizzeria, but I'm so burnt out on it since I've been working there for six years and feeding myself on their pizza for that long as well. Pan Asian cuisine becomes bafflingly interchangeable. There is good food in Lacey, however, where all the strip malls and non white people are.



Films: I made a feature length film called *Klute*. It took me four years and a couple thousand dollars; it's a crude, druggy comedy/noir?. Making a movie is ridiculous - I put more time and energy in that project than

anything else in my life and what the fuck am I supposed to do with it? Plug it in band interviews? I took my movies on tour a few times and tried to give them away to people buying **GUN OUTFIT** stuff but the looks of apathy on the faces of the customers were too much and I quickly ceased. I've got like fifty short movies that are 'comedies'. I am also a film nerd and would like to talk movies with you if you have an interest.

Kanako from *BROKEN WATER* makes well produced shorter movies that have been pretty successful and are great formalist essays and can be pretty funny too.

Reid Urban, who collaborated with the art on the new tape, makes crazed art movies that are pretty unique, posted on vimeo under his name.

Bridget Irish, who was playing in Olympia bands back in the '80's and '90's, continues to hold the flag for the video artists around here.

Bryan Connolly and Zack Carlson, who wrote the *Destroy All movies* book about punks in film, both used to live here, churned out about a thousand scripts, and Bryan made some pretty good feature length videos as well.

Joe Denardo, from *GROWING*, who used to live in here (now in Brooklyn), just finished a great documentary about Bulgarian women singers called *Ima Nema*.

Jon Clark, also a former Olympian, spent a lot of time on a strange movie called *Spectrum Hunters* which I think is distributed by Not Not Fun, which Carrie and I are in briefly.

It's crazy all these people doing movies and having a way harder time doing it than music. If there are any people with cool local film scenes that are confused about what to do, please contact me. I've always thought there should be a film/video analog to the music scene but I don't really know how to make that happen. Movies just don't resonate with people the same way that music does (individual vs. social experience).



4. You've done a few 12"s, a few tapes...what's on the cards next?

Dylan: Well we've been making various half-albums for a year and a half, most of which will probably never come out? But we just finished recording another long LP finally in LA with Cundo. This is a great record. The new tape is very 'lo fi'. The record isn't - there's a lot of 'crooning' on it, as well as bass. It's really gonna surprise some people, but not the true heads.

5. Tangent. What's your favourite *ROLLING STONES* record and why? Does it get much better than the "I'm a Moonnkeey" bit on *Let It Bleed*?

Dylan: Lately it's been *Tattoo* You even though I wouldn't say it's their best record. Everything just goes in phases especially with a band like the *STONES* who took so many slightly different approaches to the same basic thing. What's been really interesting to me about the *STONES* lately though is I've been obsessed with when they started to get shitty. It's a pretty fine line - they were really good for a long time, I mean they were one of the few bands that could play a stadium and make it seem not that awkward (or at least wink at the awkwardness). Was it a shift in production values that doomed them? There's nothing that different about *Steel Wheels* other than it's more 'processed' sounding (and Mick's weird growls). Or was it because they really started hating each other? At some point the bottom (cool, self awareness) fell out of their hamming and it appeared to be very labored. But it's not like they ever got less popular in the mainstream, it's just all the crazy *STONES* fans I know quietly disavowed their later records. Bands like the *STONES* are so interesting because their artistic vision lines up exactly with what the majority of people want and with the changing times in the modern world - it's rare, they don't have to compromise at all. So you can see that they got really bad at some point and not really blame them personally - it's just the point where the ridiculousness of business/music became apparent. Though I'm full of shit perhaps.

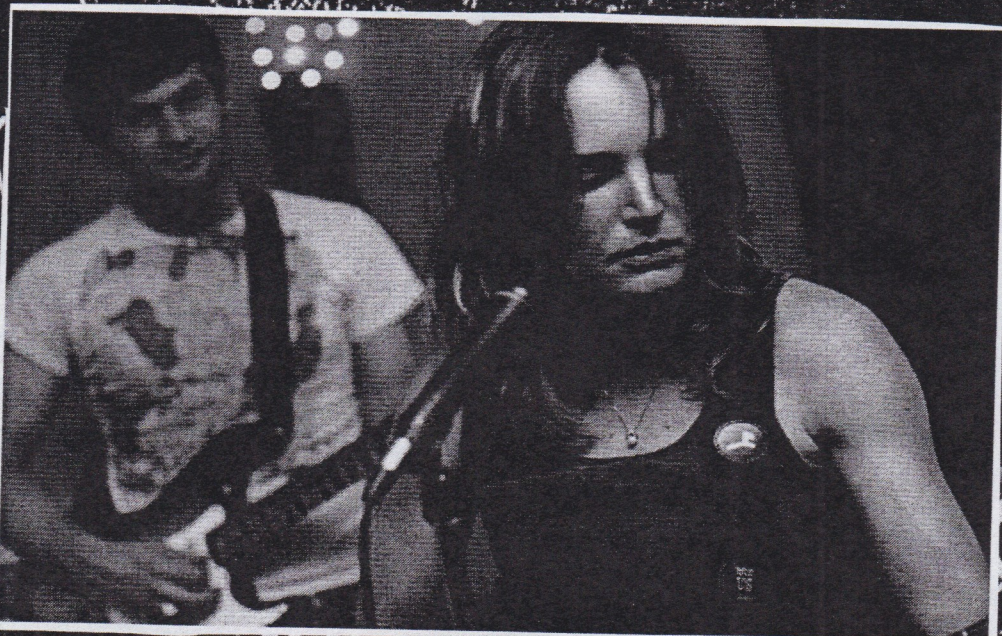


6. What music did you grow up listening to, and when did you first discover punk? What effect did it have on you? Did you go through a teenage phase of thinking punk was IT and rejecting other forms of music (a common occurrence I'd say), or were you more open? And if the former when did things change?

Dylan: I grew up as a really little kid listening to oldies, that was my favorite. I started liking punk when I started identifying myself as an 'individual'. Definitely I went through a period in high school where I thought all other music that wasn't emotional or political to be bullshit posturing. This was before I discovered the deep currents through which bullshit posturing runs. I was very harsh - only a specific form of hardcore would do. I became more open when I moved to Olympia in 2000 - I was still playing in a hardcore band but I started getting much more into the **GRATEFUL DEAD** etc. I wanted weird music, or music that would slightly annoy the Seattle hardcore scene, which was kind of conservative I've got to say. Eventually I stopped caring about scenes and just was very grateful to hear music that wasn't horrible, no matter which genre it fell into.

7. You recently toured Europe. How was it? Did you have a good time? What were your favourite places to play, and countries in general? Obviously being English I'm intrigued to what you thought about our little country - had you ever been here before, and what were your impressions in general? Did you notice any stereotypes (tea-drinking/queue-forming/weather discussing), and how did the music scene seem different to your home?

Dylan: Touring Europe was great. I don't think Europeans in general realize the difference between the general attitude towards touring in US and there. We got food every day in Europe, whereas I got fed in the US maybe ten times in two full length tours. It's not much, but it's a small gesture of "hey we appear to care about what you are doing" that goes a really long way. In the US, there's much more interference from the people who think you are trying to scam them out of something, or the weird rock music bureaucrats who are attempting to get paid for some reason. We've never had a booker or anything, so in general the US has been good (the remnants of the DIY scene are still strong in some places and we've been able to develop personal relationships with people putting on our shows) - it gets sketchy when there is hype, and people trying to gamble on whether you're going to pay off for them or not. I'm naive about Europe though - I was like "yay I'm in Europe" the whole time I was there and didn't really notice as many dark undercurrents. I enjoyed England a lot, I think it's a discriminating crowd. I liked everywhere though. I kind of play the role of detached observer so I can avoid the roller coaster ride of euphoria from a good show ('they like us!') and the depression of a bad show ('no one cares!'). I have been to England once before as roadie for my friends in **GROWING** on their first tour there in 2004. That was interesting, the shows were a lot like the **GUN OUTFIT** shows except that they had some annoying guy from some British label siphoning off the top and generally causing stress. You know I really love British history though... I read all of Boswell's Journals, and Life of Johnson etc. I love that, so I enjoyed just associating places with names. The British scene seems very self-aware though, almost to an annoying point. Like NME and all that, it's too much. But we did play with some cool bands there, a much higher percentage than the rest of Europe, and I did see an esteemed Cambridge professor puff a blunt and criticize **KRS-ONE'S** political naiveté and use of the 'cypher' outside of a Swedish dance night club.



THE

END

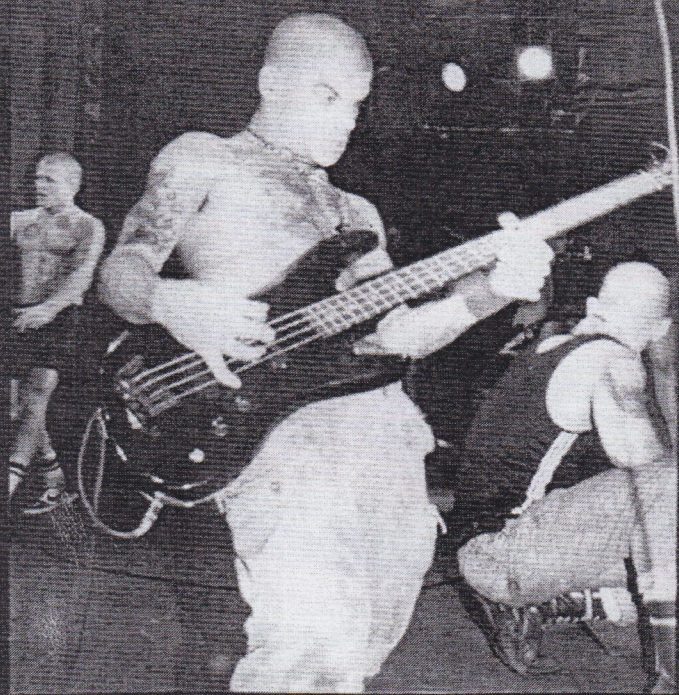
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Cro-Mags



PHOTOS: JJ

AF and CRO MAGS in the same issue? Why not.

I actually wrote these paragraphs before Harley decided to escalate years of NYHC cartoon rivalry by going on his rampage. By the time this is published who knows where the story will have led...

I seem to end up gravitating towards writing about records in the 'hardcore canon' that have already been talked about so much over the years. I have no justification for this. After the X Claim article in issue #2, I had various people feeding back that I shouldn't be writing about such classic records ("they're only popular because they're old") and that I should either be concentrating more on the 'here and now' or just on the neglected and obscure. Besides rejecting to this present-centric lack of perspective, and resisting the urge to write a thousand word article on an average record that's only desired because of its rarity, I have to admit I'd rather write about music I've loved for years than anything else. It certainly beats trying to muster up enthusiasm for the latest emperor's-new-clothes copycat act dredged up from the messageboard swamp. I'm open to suggestions that CRO-MAGS really weren't all that, an opinion held by some I respect, but they won't change my mind. Beyond all the hyperbole that still surrounds them, the CRO-MAGS will still be best remembered for a one-off classic, which I happen to love.

You could probably make a whole issue compiling pieces from other zines written about Age of Quarrel (mostly from Belgium). Its initial effects on the worlds of punk and metal have long passed, helping to shape the sound of so many bands in ways hard to summarise. Its '90s popularity is a distant memory too, recorded in time through various average Euro metalcore bands who liked the MAGS about as much as they liked SLAYER (hey, both of these bands are good - maybe '90s Euro metalcore is good too? Oh no...it's not. Fuck ARKANGEL). And then there was the early millennial revival. You couldn't go to a show without being hit in the face with a cover of 'World Peace' here or 'It's The Limit' there. This was closely followed by the revisionism around Alpha Omega and even Near Death Experience, with the same kind of mouth-breathers who genuinely like INTO ANOTHER or prefer QUICKSAND to BAD BRAINS starting to praise their slick-fart crossover stylings. For a minute, just forget all that and focus on AOQ.

When I first heard AOQ as a teenager it made perfect sense. It was what hardcore *should* have sounded like to my ears, the kind of music that the streetpunks I'd seen in Jackie Chan's *Rumble In The Bronx* should have been listening to (before or after painting the NAUSEA logos on their jackets - a band, by the way, who define being 'just okay'. "FUCK YEAH, THIS RECORD IS OKAY! PUT IT ON AGAIN MAN, IT'S REALLY NOT TOO BAD!")

It's a record that's victim to one of the most common fallacies in hardcore and in music in general; that "it's good, but the production lets it down". File alongside *Rock For Light* in the folder for 'near misses'. Well I don't agree. AOQ sounds just fine. It's got the perfect balance of mud and razor cutting bite, its only real weakness being the superiority of the often praised demos. Fair enough, but let's not forget the demo doesn't have 'Seekers of the Truth', 'Street Justice' or the almighty 'We Gotta Know' (the solo of which makes me think of DISCHARGE every time).

I don't want to talk about the band members' backgrounds or 'life in NYC' and how it might have moulded their sound. Really, locale is only one ingredient in what makes a band. A small and insignificant town like New Mills in Derbyshire gave birth to BLITZ, VIOLATORS and ATTACK, but there's so little to say about the place. Can we trace the origins of these UK82 classics to their Methodist coal mining heritage? Ok, maybe. But what I'm trying to say is that it's the music that speaks for itself, and so it is for the MAGS.



It has a groove without being 'groovy' and a crude violent sound that was lost on so many contemporary 'crossover' records, appealing to fist-banging longhairs and hardcore freaks alike. While I love **CRUMBSUCKERS**, early **PRONG** and all that, it's so clinical and stale compared to **AOQ**. The **MAGS** recognised the value of straying only so far into the metal abyss, retaining the punk vitalism of the NY hardcore classics that preceded them (**ANTIDOTE**, **URBAN WASTE**, and most obviously honorary New Yorkers **BAD BRAINS**, especially in the bits where JJ tries his hardest to sound like HR, a vital ingredient to his sound). Too bad they forgot this on the records that followed...

Along with **MAN IS THE BASTARD**, *Age of Quarrel* (and even more so the demos) is also a key example of the bass being the real star of the show in a hardcore band. I find it hard to understand how Harley managed to get that fucking sound. Lemmy must have been his inspiration, but with a power and speed of playing that even rivals Eric Wood and co (with a similar propensity towards bass chords, an undervalued approach if you ask me). The intro to 'World Peace' is a prime example of its singular impact. Staggering.

Crucially, *Age Of Quarrel* is an album that helps disprove the ridiculous notion that hardcore was somehow dead by 1986, an idea being ridiculed across the world: by **GAUZE** in Japan, **GRB** in Spain, **NEGAZIONE** in Italy, **ANTI-CIMEX** in Sweden, **COC** and **POISON IDEA** in the US...the list is endless! And for those who objected to the metal influences found in all these bands and in the **MAGS**, no fucking sympathy. Your dreams of an imaginary punk purity just weren't being fulfilled.

For me, *The Age of Quarrel* remains a hardcore signpost to be talked about alongside *Why?*, *Damaged*, the **ROIR** tapes, and *Pick Your King*. It will always be up there in these imaginary echelons. A lot of people won't agree, but a lot of people watch *Everybody Loves Raymond* and listen to **LEMURIA**. People can't be trusted. Nixon knew that. Wire everything.

The End.

PEACE ON

EARTH



PURITY OF
ESSENCE

MORE THINGS I USED TO THINK THAT NOW I THINK THE OPPOSITE

That **SHOXSIE AND THE BANSHEES** weren't any good.

That **ZZ TOP** weren't any good (I know - I was a fucking idiot).

That **KISS** never wrote a good song (I still don't think they ever did a wholly good album).

That bands with names like **FOLLOW THROUGH** (yes, I know) were anything other than total shit.

That live albums were rarely worthwhile.

That I didn't like black coffee.

That **Ed Miller Band** might have worked out (sorry Britain, future worries).

That I wouldn't get stuck in a job I hate just to have a steady wage.

That listening to a dubbed copy of a record was anyway near as good as owning it.

That **Ken Russell** would manage one more classic before kicking it.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Talent is in no way hereditary. Else the son of Daniel Higgs (**LUNGFISH**) would be in a better band than **TRAPPED UNDER ICE**.

That the live photos from religious propaganda unit **SHELTER'S** first record were actually of **YOUTH OF TODAY** as **SHELTER** hadn't played out at that point, setting a precedent for the deceptions Cappello would implement for years to come.



They should make a KILSLUG biopic. I'd watch it. Twice.

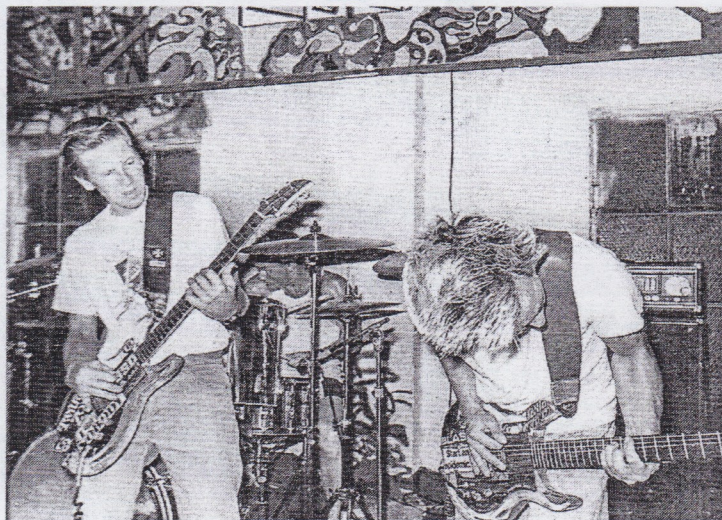
REVOLVING

One of the defining schisms of my musical life has been between **THE BEATLES** and punk rock; between **ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE** and **NO FUTURE** (both vapid Camden Town sloganeering from different eras).

When I was really young, way before getting excited by onscreen nudity or wallowing in teenage angst, I decided that **THE BEATLES** (alongside *The Simpsons*) were the greatest thing to ever exist. Why I thought this is hard to understand as an adult, but they were one of my first nerdy obsessions. Evidence remains at my parent's house; long-neglected paperback books about them, or various slogans inspired by them crudely written on my bedroom wall, covered up by wallpaper now peeling away. Being a child who grew up in the '90s, my obsession with them equally bled over into listening to dozens of awful Britpop bands with shared haircuts (remember **KULA SHAKER? KILL ME NOW**). The only thing that redeems the period was my early realisation that Paul McCartney really is an awful human being, and that bands should be cautious about letting drummers 'do their own thing' outside of the practice space...

But then I discovered punk. I vaguely remember my cousins playing **THE DAMNED** on a family visit, and my older sisters taping the occasional punk song off the radio as they were getting immersed in the early '90s grunge Big Takeover. Whatever caused it, I began obsessing over a **DEAD KENNEDYS** CD I borrowed from the city library (the past is strange), leaving my **BEATLES** albums to gather dust. It was weird, but all of their appeal suddenly disappeared. They served a purpose for my formative years of understanding the power of music, only to be kicked aside once I'd heard someone say "fuck" on a record. Their naive appeals to unconditional peace and love even seemed somewhat sickening. And their melodies were equally rejected, as I entered a phase of thinking punk was completely anti-melody and all the more authentic for it (an obvious myth, especially since I was getting into British punk and oi bands whose melodies were often ripped off straight from '60s bands). I seemed to play out the same pretend-rejection of earlier music that the early punk bands had done. Year Zero, destruction over peace, distortion over sitars, a strange ideology growing in the mind of an atypical nihilistic teenager...

It's only in the last few years that I've finally reconciled this schism. Not the schism between '60s psychedelia or 'hippie' music and punk. That was settled a long ago, way before I even thought about revisiting **THE BEATLES**. But upon revisiting them specifically, my feelings are a weird combination of nostalgic appreciation and a realisation that most of their albums were about 50% filler or pissing around. If I have a desire to hear anything of that style now, I'm more likely to visit the more **BEATLES**-esque moments on *Nuggets/Pebbles*, or examples of power-pop-done-right like mid-period **FLAMIN GROOVIES**. And while it's a laboured and ridiculously overdone comparison, I'll say it anyway - **GIVE ME THE STONES ANY DAY**. The end.



5 FAVOURITE HARDCORE GUITAR SOLOS

No explanation needed.

'Shoot To Kill' by **G.I.S.M.**

'Society's Tease' by **BLACK FLAG**

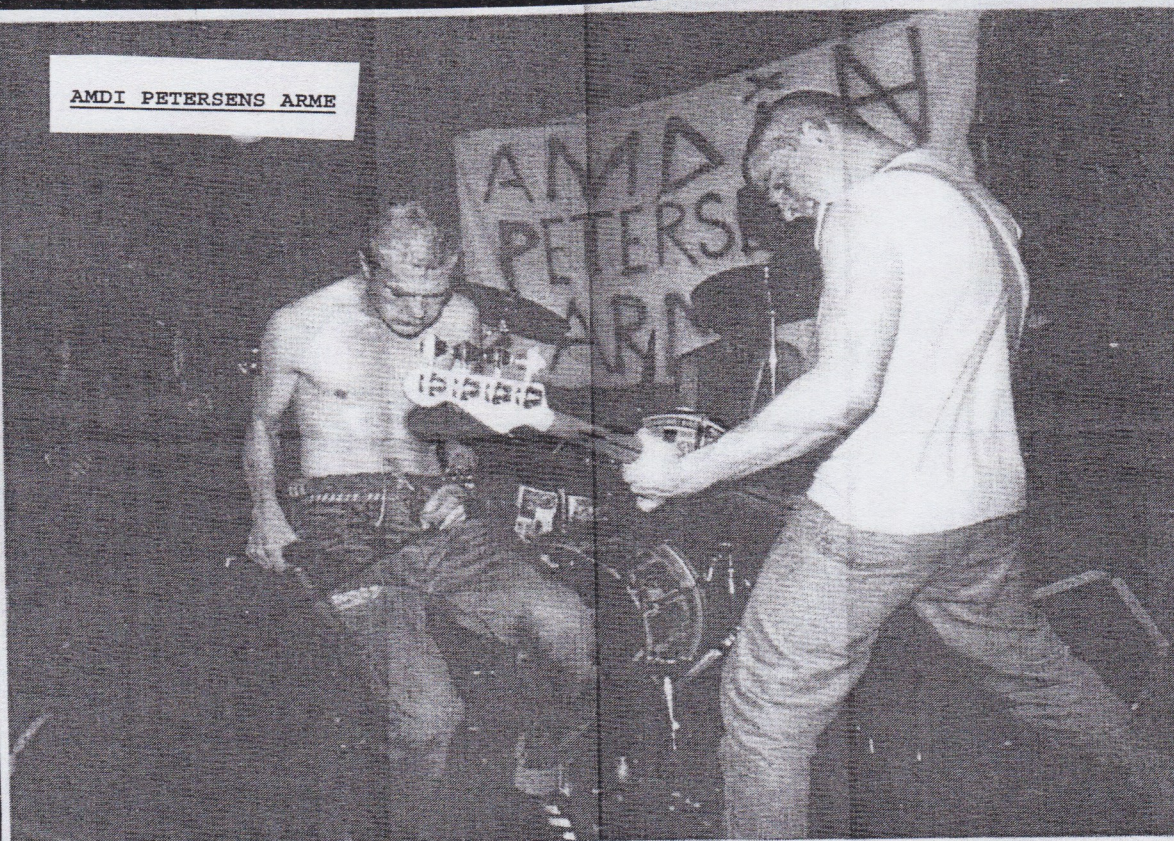
'I' by **BAD BRAINS**

'Discontent' by **POISON IDEA**

Any **DISCHARGE** solo (hell yes, I cheated)

TAKE THE **MANIC RIDE** TAKE THE **MANIC RIDE**

AMDI PETERSENS ARME



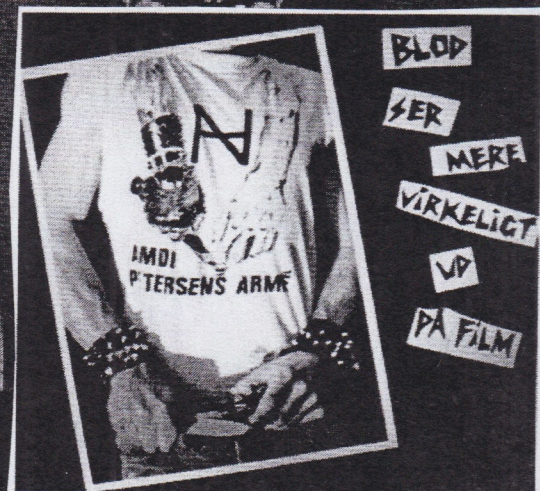
TOMMAS: BAS, SIKRALLE: TRUMMER, GUITARSOLO PÅ ANARKI/HIERAKSI, AMDI PETER: VOICEL, GUITAR, KOR PÅ "EN BORGER....": SIKRALLE, E-MAN

Some generic praise now. **AMDI PETERSENS ARME** are one of my favourite post-1990 hardcore bands, not to mention probably my favourite European punk band from this period full stop (sorry **AMULET** and **REACHING FORWARD...ahem**). They've also made a surprisingly big impact over the years, perhaps due to the novelty of them being Danish, when Denmark was and is most famous for Vikings, Carlsberg, and high taxes that the public don't mind paying. It's hard to pinpoint what I love about them, but I'll try.

My first experience of **APA** was their second 7", *Blod Ser Mere Virkeligt Ud* (online translator gives me 'Blood Looks More Really Out'!!!) which is about as good an introduction to a band as you can get. As so often happens with memorable music it evokes a time and a place, and I can remember the first time I heard it like it was yesterday. First there's the band's name, likely inspired by **JFA** aka **JODY FOSTERS ARMY**, whose 'Blatant Localism' definitely influenced **APA**. Amdi Petersen was the leader of a Maoist political 'cult' called the 'Teachers Group' in Denmark, still wanted by Danish police. I didn't know this at the time of first hearing **APA**, but it obviously adds to their overall impact. The pictures on the inner sleeve could have you believing the band members were Amdi's youngest recruits, a bunch of barely fed, diseased looking skinny hardcore punks with shaved heads and disintegrating clothes. At this point I probably hadn't seen a band that looked more like a hardcore band should look, and it was a lot less familiar then than it is now, with the multitude of post-**APA** retro bands making that fashion stale...

Then there's the cover art. It shows a sleeveless punk in spiky bracelets wearing an **APA** shirt cutting off his fingernail, the design on the shirt he's wearing portraying the same act of self-destruction. It immediately evokes **POISON IDEA'S** cover to *Kings of Punk*, with the added impact of **APA'S** band logo, an incredibly simple but evocative merging of the band's initials in the best hardcore tradition (think **NEGATIVE FX** etc). Visually linking themselves to such good bands, the music had a lot to live up to...

The intro of 'En Borger Af Samfundet' (A Citizen Of Society) gets you 'in the mood', a simple but raging mid-paced stomper, with guitars as tinny as they are powerful and the drums taking full advantage of a closed hi-hat rattle. The vocals bring it all together; a raspy snarl that still intelligibly forces through the words. Ferocious stuff but all delivered with a fairly thin sound that suits it perfectly.



How to describe it. The music is in the style of hardcore from the early '80s, not necessarily in the style of US bands but rather as if they could have fit neatly onto *Welcome to 1984* or *PEACE/WAR*. A more direct comparison is difficult, since one of **APA'S** strengths is that they only really sound like themselves. Its closest relative is probably **POISON IDEA'S** *Pick Your King*, sharing its nihilistic rage and stripped bare approach. There are also echoes of early **FLAG** and '81 Dischord, the songs as catchy as they are vicious. It really is the songwriting that's central here, something so many other modern hardcore bands forgot. Because they sing in Danish I have no clue what the songs are about, but it doesn't matter. It's a cliché, but the message really is in the medium with a band like **APA**.



APA were one of the first bands to put K-Town (aka Copenhagen) on the map, from which many would follow (**NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS** probably the most notable, or at least my favourite). It was a bit later that I heard the band's first 7", and again it was no disappointment, similar but with a slightly more direct approach. And like all good hardcore bands, **APA** knew when to quit, after 2 solid records.

Along with bands like **OUT COLD** and **LAST IN LINE**, **APA** were really key in opening me up to quality hardcore in the early 2000s, helping me realise that there were modern bands still playing this kind of music and playing it well. Unfortunately I never got to see them live. They toured the UK when I was still living with my parents and oblivious to the fact that there was any such thing as a 'punk scene' in cities across the country. Punk still felt like a distant artefact from a

long forgotten past. School friends didn't listen to **POISON IDEA**, they listened to **OCEAN COLOUR SCENE**. How was I to know that a band like **APA** were playing shows nearby? When was that, about 2000? I was too busy going to see **SICK OF IT ALL** and bands who sounded like **SICK OF IT ALL**. From all accounts, **APA** put on a great show. Woe is me. Flow my tears...

"... what has been
remains
imbedded in the brain
nestled in the folds of the flesh
distorted
it conditions
and subconsciously impels..."
(freud)

5 Hardcore Rippers To Kill Children To

Perhaps this will be a regular feature.

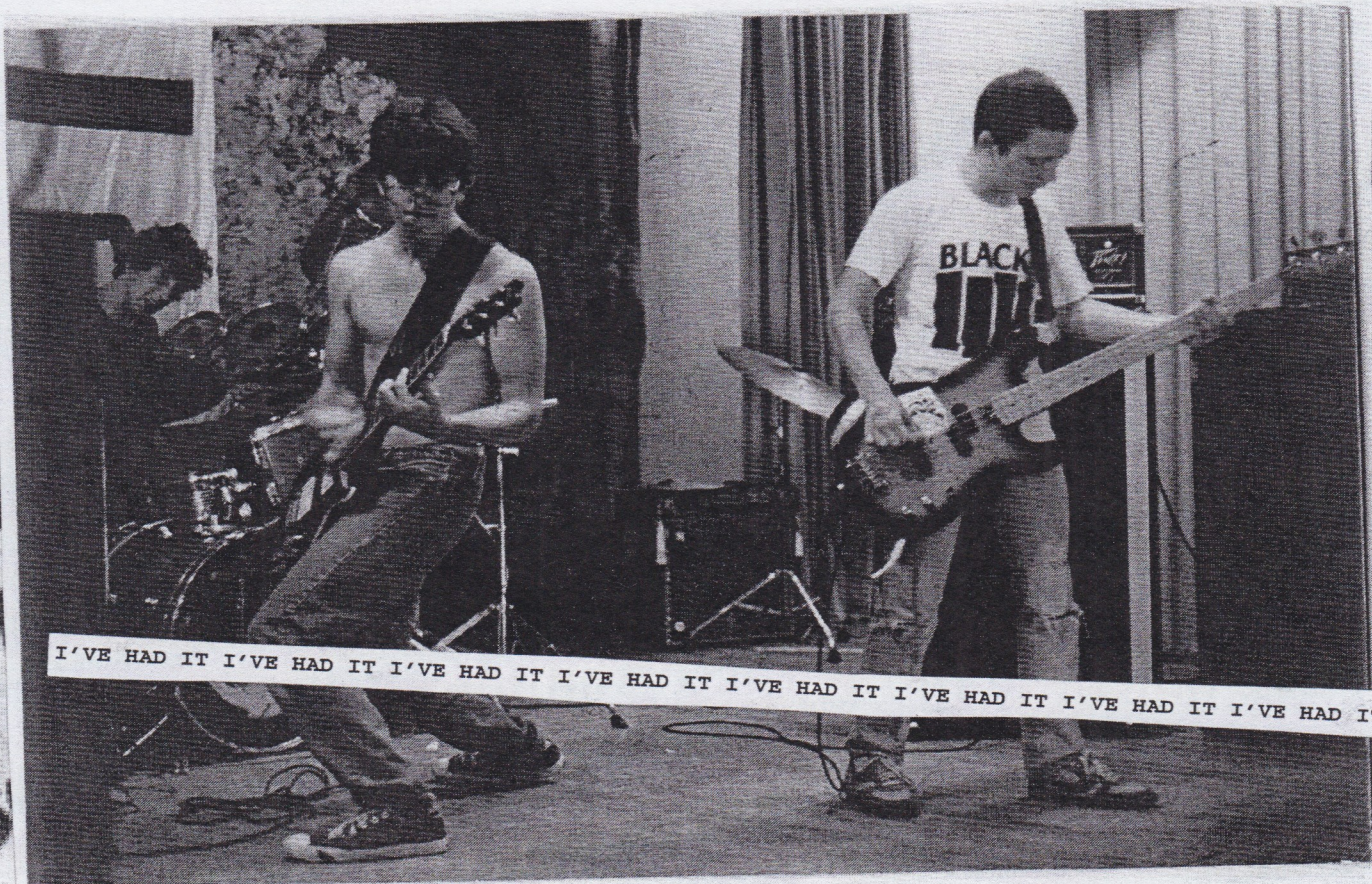
DESECRATION - 'Nuclear Holocaust/NIA' - I don't understand why this record isn't more sought after. Perhaps it's the disposable live songs or their association with Hippycore Records? Whatever it is, this song is fucking great. It hits you from the off, like a mix of Boston '82 at its wildest (the vocals even sounding like Smalley before he became a living punchline) and **CRUCIFIX** with a metal edge. Highlights are the bit where he shouts 'HOLOCAAAUST' going into that Bones-inspired solo, and the entire simplistic philosophy of '80s hardcore summed up in the line 'YOU BETTER RUN FROM WORLD WAR III'.

DEATHWISH - 'Tailgate' - Speaking of Boston '82, along with **DXA** and **THE GROINOID**s, **DEATHWISH** fit in the camp of slightly lesser-known but equally raging delinquents to the X Claim scene. I know next to nothing about the band's background, all I know is that 'Tailgate' is a bona-fide HIT. It's got the Boston dirge-slam section led by a simple bass riff, going into a fast blur that evokes **IMPACT UNIT** - rinse, dry, repeat, and there you have it. Hardcore.

F - 'No' - Maybe the best from America's wang, **F** have a kinda **FARTZ**-meets-early-**DIE KREUZEN** sound that works for me. This song is a twisted mid-paced scrawl that never forgets to be catchy. And ok, **YOUTH BRIGADE DC** did it first, but is there a stronger hardcore statement than 'NO' repeated over and over? No Burroughs-inspired City Rock Patti Smith poetry bullshit here, just one word repeated until it becomes meaningless. Hardcore.

ALTERCATION - 'Unite Us' - Amongst New York hardcore nerds, the **ALTERCATION** demo is justifiable elevated to status of "best NYHC demo you might not have heard". For me, they represent what **WARZONE** could have been, despite only being a side-project. Darker, meaner, rawer, better. This song opens the demo and kicks out immediately with a fast verse (with trademark NYHC high up bass noodling) going into a mid-paced crunch that give them room to sing about standing beside each other and shit. Needs a reissue.

MODERN WARFARE - 'Nothings Left' - This song is an oddity in this bands discography, since the rest more or less sounds like quality but 'traditional' Californian hardcore. Instead this sounds like a teenage US hardcore version of **G.I.S.M.** playing demented practice scales. The incomprehensible vocals with the odd captured phrase; the piercing car-alarm guitar punctuation; the creepy nursery rhyme guitar solo in the middle, with bonus panting...The whole thing is a glorious classic in my opinion, a standout in weird early US hardcore summed up in the repeated line 'WHAT THE FUCK' towards the end.



T

Along with bands like NO and newer offering VEXED, THE LOWEST FORM are proving that the London area can produce damn good hardcore even this late in the game. On the back of their tape and live performances I asked them some nonsense. Paco was too busy running his record empire to answer my questions!

1. What was the inspiration behind Lowest Form starting and whose idea was it? Do you think the combination of talents each member brings is important in the 'end product'? (i.e. Birds of Delay signatory, record label overlord, record collector supreme, and the other guy I unfortunately don't know much about)

Michael: we were all friends before in our various walks of life. We've known, or bits of us have known, each other for years and it became a subject we talked about when drunk until it became sober reality. I suppose the end product is a direct result of our various talents and ineptitudes.

Luke: I have been friends with Chris for years and I wanted to start a "punk" band with him, so we asked around looking for people who might be interested in playing with us. I wanted the band to bring something to the table that was different to the punk / hardcore bands that were doing the rounds in London at that time and took a while to find the right people. Paco was working one day a week at the Rough Trade West shop at the time and me and Chris went in their one day when we were out looking at records. He heard that we were trying to start this band and he said he would be up for playing drums. Me and Chris had known Paco for almost 10 years at this point and neither of us had any clue that he could drum - I don't think I believed him until the very first practice actually. Michael was working in the Music and Video Exchange at the time and knew the three of us independently of each other. I asked Michael to practice with us because I knew he liked loads of different music and had zero connection to the hardcore scene. The only brief I gave him was that he had to play the cheapest shittiest guitar that he could find.

2. What bands did you initially want to sound like or take conscious influence from? Was there any covers you did to 'get in the mood'? I always find this interesting, especially when the band ends up miles from its original intentions...

Michael: We like a lot of music in common, Chris and I worked in a record store together for years, Luke and I played in various bands on the same bills and Paco sold us all records over the years. Having said that, I don't think we've ever talked about what bands we wanted to sound like. Not that we think we are anything new or different, it just never comes up. We might comment that such and such sounds like SIEGE or something and perhaps one or two riffs were turned down because they sounded too much like some obscure Finnish punk 7" that only Paco and 3 other people have heard. But then maybe there's a couple of riffs in there that are there because they're from some obscure Finnish punk 7" that only Paco has heard, I don't know.

Chris: I just wanted us to start a raw hardcore band with my mates.

Luke: The idea behind the band was to play fast punk music that was infected by noise and hardcore. Speaking for myself, there has never been a moment where I have thought "I want to sound like this band". It's more about the manifestation of a particular sound / idea. Of course there are bands that influence on a sonic level which are not hardcore orientated like LES RALLIZES DENUDES, HIJOKAIDAN, BRAINBOMBS, some black metal, etc... but I wouldn't say we sound anything like them, nor have we tried to imitate their styles. The actual hardcore element of the band is almost an unconscious aspect of the music for me - I don't even think of it being there really. To go back to your question though, there haven't been any covers and I don't think there's much interest within the band to start doing them.

3. Out of interest, were any other band names kicked around before settling on THE LOWEST FORM? Can you remember them? Also do you have any names 'in the bank' that you'd love to use for a band in the future?

Michael: All the names that were bandied around before settling on THE LOWEST FORM sounded like the names that appear in capitals in Maximum Rock n Roll reviews of other bands with the same kind of names. And so I've forgotten them all. I quite liked MIST, the only one I can remember, but it was turned down for being too MG / NWOBHM /

stupid, one of the three.

Luke: Quite a lot, but they were mostly terrible.





MAKE

4. Say a little about what TLF has released so far, and what the plans are next. Why did you decide to release the same songs on 7" as on the tape?

Michael: Some Horrible Bug tape and a 7" culled from the tape. The 7" contained the songs we thought came out best from the session which, from my point of view, was incredibly successful down to the skills and patience of John Hannon at NO Recording. Personally I thought and think that the songs on the tape, or most of them, were too good to be sunk on a demo and deserved to be cut to 7" at least. We're going to record a 12" soon with John again and then there's a couple of compilations we're on, an *Iron Lung* mixtape and maybe a flexi for *More Noize* fanzine.

Luke: The idea of the 7" came before the tape. We only released the tape because the 7" was taking a while to come out and thought it would be nice to have the rest of the material from the session available for those who wanted to hear it. I think that the tracks on the 7" are the best ones and they're the only tracks we still play live, aside from the last one which we are re-recording for our LP anyway.

5. Standard question - When did you get into hardcore? Can you remember your first show/record you heard? And what did you love about it? What remains of this early love and why?

Michael: I had a conversation recently with a friend who couldn't understand that I didn't hear any hardcore until I was in my early 20s. I grew up in Cyprus in the early 90s where there was no punk and no internet. There was sunshine, UK Garage and *IRON MAIDEN*, which I liked years before hearing *BLACK FLAG*. When I moved to the UK things like *NIRVANA*, then free jazz, noise and ethnic music (is there a politically correct way of saying this?) all got to me before hardcore. The first exposure I had to that sphere was working in a venue in Glasgow and being blown away by bands like *SHANK*, *SWEEP THE LEG JOHNNY*, things like that. The first time I saw *SHANK* they were so loud the glasses behind the bar rumbled off the shelves and shattered on the floor. I bought their records without understanding what micro genre they were and whether it was cool to like it. I find and found the aggression a release of some kind that is hard to describe without sounding like a dick. But it's probably too late for that anyway. Everything remains of that early love.

Chris: I got into hardcore from friends making me mixtapes. I remember some guys from Margate making me some tapes with stuff like *MINOR THREAT*, *BEAT HAPPENING*, *NAKED RAYGUN* etc. It wasn't long before I'd started to find records myself. I remember ordering records from Spread and Flat Earth. Sned sent me a load of tapes with an early order that had *DISCORDANCE AXIS* and loads of bands like that, I loved those tapes. Another big turnaround was bumping into someone in the street wearing an *EHG* top in Canterbury and we got talking about bands and that. I remember going round to look at his records and just being blown away, every *Slap A Ham* record, loads of Japanese hardcore and bands like *16* and all the Pushead related stuff. Through him I got into *RORSCHACH* who had a huge influence on me. It's funny thinking back now I'm having so many memories of people who made me tapes and vice versa from just meeting in the street because they had a *DYSTOPIA* shirt or whatever.

Luke: The first hardcore record I ever heard was *UNIFORM CHOICE'S Screaming For A Change LP* in a record shop in Camden when I was 15. As a teenager, I was very impressed at the speed of the music so I bought it. Last time I heard it, I seem to remember it sounded very weak and cheesy. Last hardcore record I remember enjoying a lot was probably the last thing by either *GAUZE*, *DOUBLE NEGATIVE*, *KRIEGSHOG*, or *SEX/VID* which would have been a while ago now - I am out of the loop somewhat.



SUMP
THE LOWEST FORM
HUNGER
POLLUTIVE STATIC

SATURDAY FEB 4TH
POWER LUNCHES
441 KINGSLAND RD

6. Do the band members share interests outside of music? Do you think you'd get on with each other in a social setting if you didn't have music to talk about? Do you think you like similar non-musical cultural past-times i.e. types of films or books etc? Not trying to pick at underlying resentments between band members of course...

Michael: Yes to all of the above. We got on before the band. The band is a result of us having fun as friends. If we didn't get on and if we weren't good friends there would be no band.

Chris: Yes we are all great friends and I believe we would be even if we didn't share some musical interests. There probably are far more bands we disagree on than agree on. I am so happy that we are all in a band together.

Luke: Yes, we have been friends for a long time prior to the band. Me and Chris lived together, Paco used to give me free tickets and coffee at the cinema he used to work at, and me and Michael often share amusing YouTube clips with each other.

7. The band is obviously trans-national, in the sense that band members are from all over. What effect do you think this might have had on the band? Do you think differing experiences of 'punk' in different countries might have added to what LTF is? Or is 'punk' the same everywhere?

Michael: As I said earlier, I'm half Cypriot and Paco is Spanish. I think everyone's experiences - punk or not - must have an influence in some way, but who knows? My own perception is that regional differences in punk are disappearing very fast due to globalisation and the proliferation of information. It's now possible for bands in Singapore to listen to Swedish D-beat from the 80s, for Peruvian bands to get into a British band that released a tape in the early 90s or whatever. I mean they always could of course, through fanzines and other networks, but the internet and the access to music is so democratised now that punk music is almost universal. Japanese bands doing Spanish lyric crust, bands like us sounding like Japanese hardcore etc. Punk has become like Starbucks I suppose, it's everywhere and you can detect the same strains in any corner of the globe, but when there's amazing bands coming from Singapore where there wasn't before who gives a shit??

Luke: I think in Europe there's probably more dirt, drugs, piss and dogs, but I'm not sure.

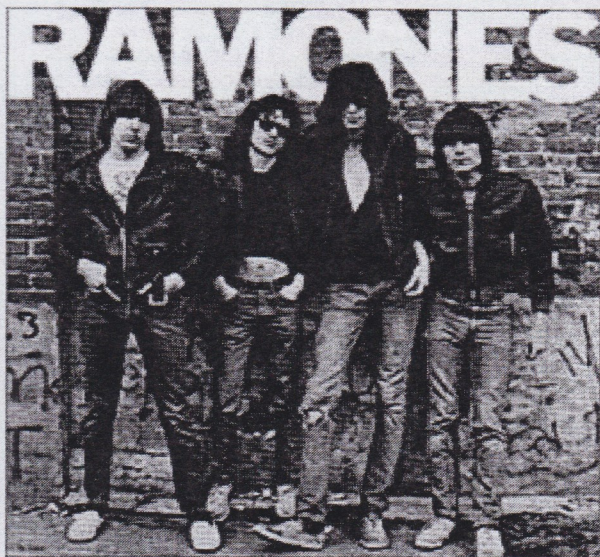
8. Bands usually hate the question of "what do you sound like". Do you think it foolish to ask a band to make a judgement on their own sound? Isn't it up to the listener to decide? And what do you think about the difficulty of approaching or understanding a band with or without comparisons to others? I.e. it's difficult for a band to just sound like themselves without a multitude of comparisons being evoked just by listening

Michael: I understand that if you were reading a review of a group like **THE LOWEST FORM** in a zine then it is helpful for the reviewer to write "blown out drumming like **DISCLOSE**" or whatever, but of course these comparisons don't really do the bands any justice. It puts me off a little, reading reviews like that, because generally speaking the reviewer seems to be trying to out-punk the reader. I read a review and a band might be compared to 3 bands that I've never heard of and I immediately get bored. And exclusivity in music or punk is one of my least favourite things. One of my worst nightmares would be to be locked in to playing hardcore shows for the next ten years to a bunch of people who fully understand everything you're doing. What's the point? You might as well be in the **TEMPTATIONS** and do a Motown package tour and make shit loads of money. It's not about wanting to be 'challenging' or 'different.' I just think this music shouldn't be limited to record collectors and macho dudes. Although **THE LOWEST FORM** has plenty of record collectors and macho dudes in it of course. Some of my favourite gigs have been playing with groups like **LIBEREZ** or indie bands where the crowd aren't used to seeing this music and have interesting, sometimes extreme, reactions.

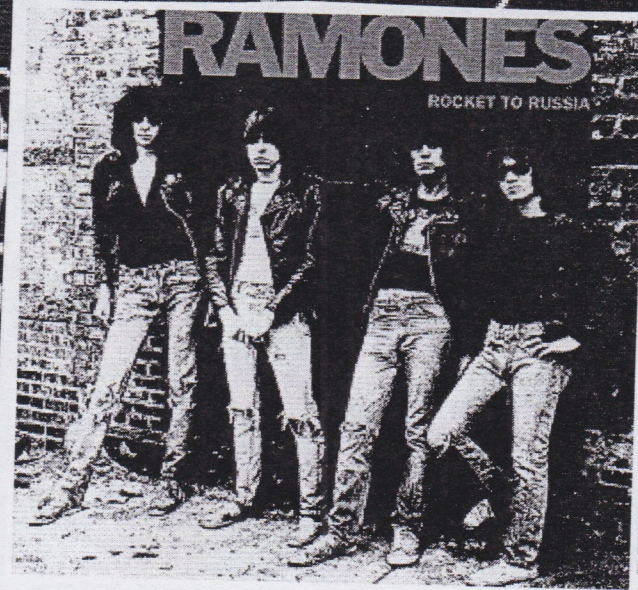
Luke: When describing the band I normally just say that we play fast noisy hardcore music. People are of course welcome to throw comparisons around if it makes them and others happy, but I don't really pay much attention to that. I think it's pretty much impossible to have a truly original voice in punk these days anyway.



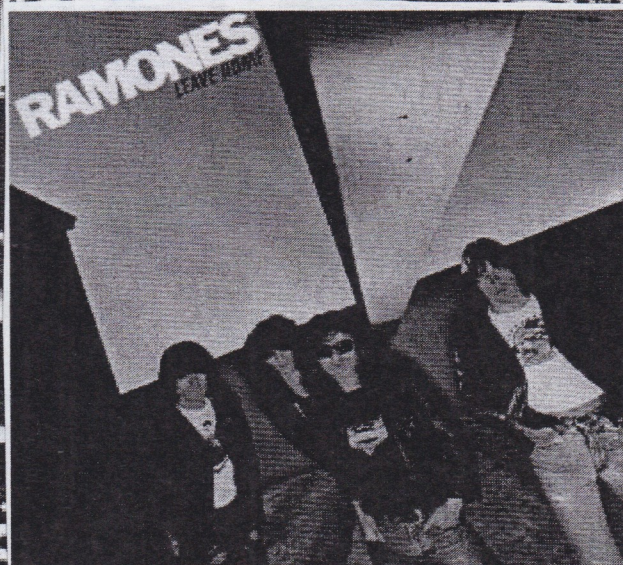
A HISTORY OF THE RAMONES THROUGH THEIR ALBUM COVERS



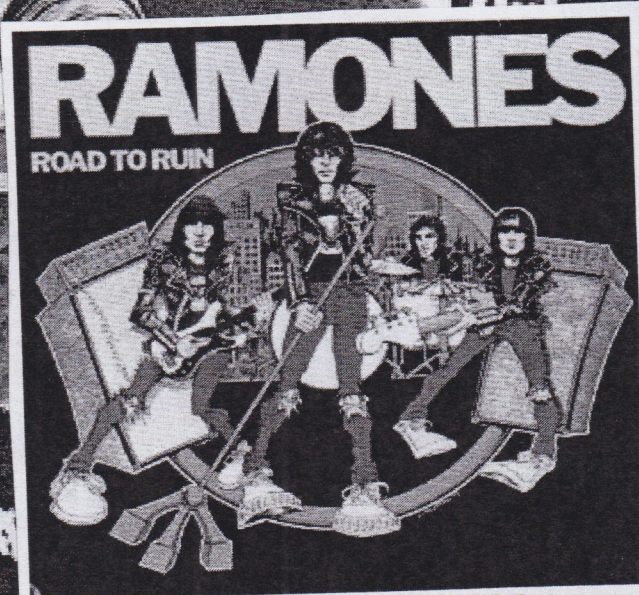
1. Arguably a cover as important as the music (at least I imagine for a lot of potential buyers at the time). A simple portrait of street goobers in stances that have been copied so much since (black and white, nonchalant looks, hunched/leaning stances, all against a graffiti'd brick wall). Tommy's belly and Joey's chest take centre stage, competing for the attention of confused boys and desperate girls. People knew this wasn't a **SWEET** record (with colourful swatztika'd spandex suits), blue jeans and black jackets setting the tone. I think I read they originally wanted something more **BEATLES**-esque that didn't work out? Praise Jah...



3. Return to square one, with colour intruding only in the font (different colours on different pressings?) 'It it ain't broke' as marketing mantra. No belly on show this time, but Joey's still got his chest out, and Johnny's probably wearing a racist shirt of some kind. Also while I kind of dislike a lot of the **RAMONES/Punk Magazine** cartoon work, I like the back cover of this (the rocket man).



2. Colour intruding with a slightly abstract composition. Sticking to the label's knowledge that the band's look was as marketable as their songs (if not more so). Perhaps also reflecting how it's a slightly less tough record than the debut, as on the 'California Sun' cover. If you look closely, it looks like Johnny's wearing a t-shirt showing Micky Mouse taunting a cartooned black person while holding the American flag. Or am I crazy? **INTRIGUING.**



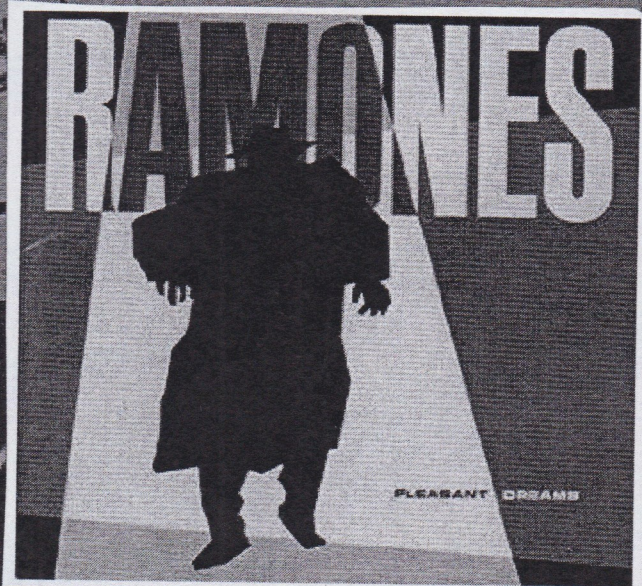
4. An example of why I don't like the **RAMONES/Punk Magazine** cartoons. A few years in, and the band's image was becoming iconic but also open to parody, with the music itself already a well-emulated template by this point. It also perhaps reflects the band's interest in '60s garage and its cartoonish imagery.

the Worse

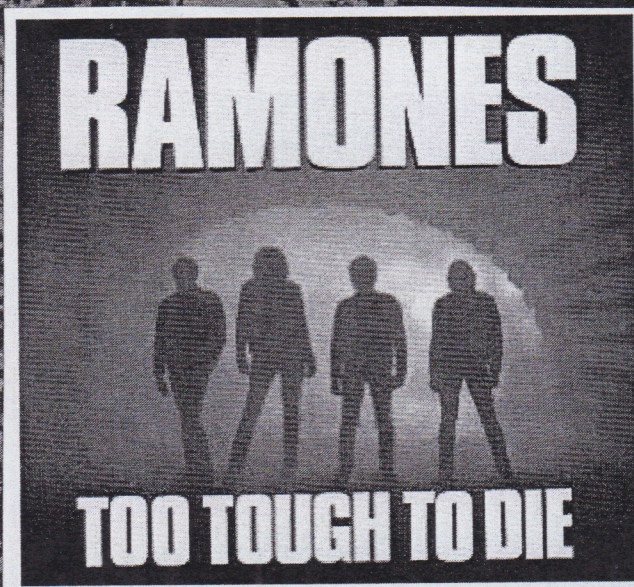


5. The '60s boyband fetish becomes even more realised. No racist shirt for Johnny, unless the red symbolises an Enoch Powell-inspired river of blood. A gap of two years since the last one, and the world had embraced colourful clean new wave imaginary, as opposed to dingy black and white streets. Despite the first song being about the radio, it's a record emerging into the MTV world. And it's fucking great.

7. BOOM. If Debbie Harry was going to exploit the rising popularity of 'urban' music (who incidentally did backing vocals on *Pleasant Dreams*), then so would the **RAMONES**. Johnny's just trying to get off the train to avoid the black guy. Joey is more resigned to the situation. But the best thing about it is the passport photo of Marky used in the window on the left, because he was on the outs from the band and wasn't at the shoot.



6. I actually kind of like this cover, as a cool homage to pulp detective magazines or the *Pink Panther* cartoons or something. The first one that doesn't feature the actual band members (photo or cartoon), perhaps in response to Dee Dee becoming less photographic by the day. Decent record even if it marks a decline.



8. Their main 'hardcoresploitation' record, even after the hardcore boom had started to wane. But I guess **SUICIDAL TENDENCIES** records were big sellers and **METALLICA** had also started to become a BIG DEAL. While the cover is supposed to reference *Clockwork Orange* it reminds me more of the blue-saturated aesthetics of the mid-'80s (*QUEEN* music videos, *Highlander* etc), squarely dating it.



9. Joey seems a bit pissed off about the loser in the monkey suit behind him (perhaps it's Phil Spector, cocked and loaded). I like these kinds of ridiculous covers that try to crudely represent the album's title in literal terms. Springsteen *The River* title font and leather fetish overtones, with Johnny really connecting with the chimp in the middle. I don't think I've heard more than a couple of songs off it, but the ones I did have a decided thrashy mid-period GBH vibe (like the title-track), which isn't bad.



11. Always thought this looked like an **INTEGRITY** album cover, or at least a third-tier Holy Terror record (**PALE CREATION** anyone?) Again, the shades and leather couldn't hide the bands declining physical state, so what's better than a strange doctored photograph that seems completely ill-fitting to the music? Again I don't know much off this besides a few songs (like 'Pet Cemetery'), and I know dully boys **PEARL JAM** often cover the first song...



10. You know you're well into the '80s now, with **MOTLEY CRUE** pink backing light and a horrific font. Joey's chest has been put to retirement, while in response Johnny is threateningly thrusting his crotch out. Again, I don't think I've heard much of this.

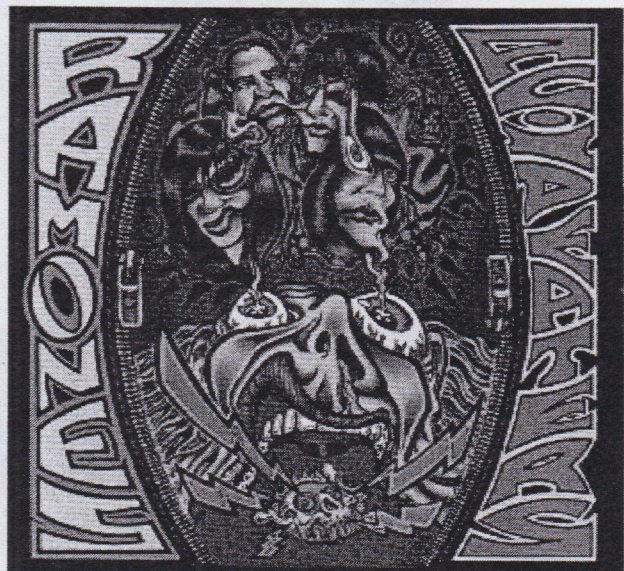


12. Further attempts to mask the changing looks of the band members, or to hide the fact that Dee Dee had left (to become the hip-hop superstar...) Looking at the tracklist, I don't think I've heard ANY of this.

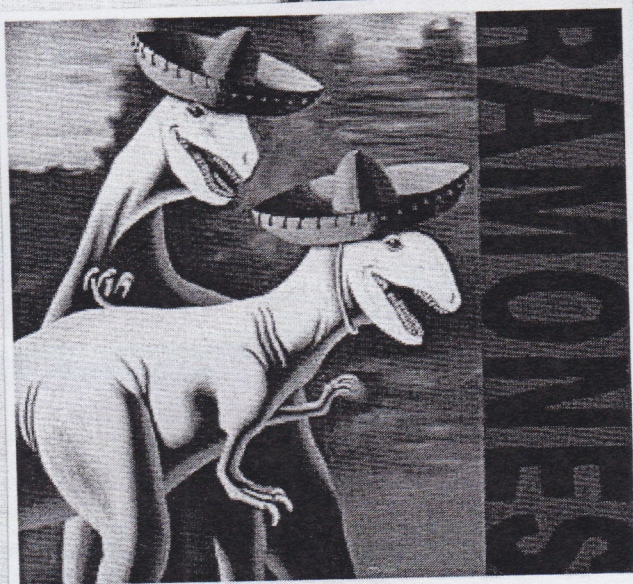
AMERICAN LEGION HALL

CUT NOW ON

TH
DI
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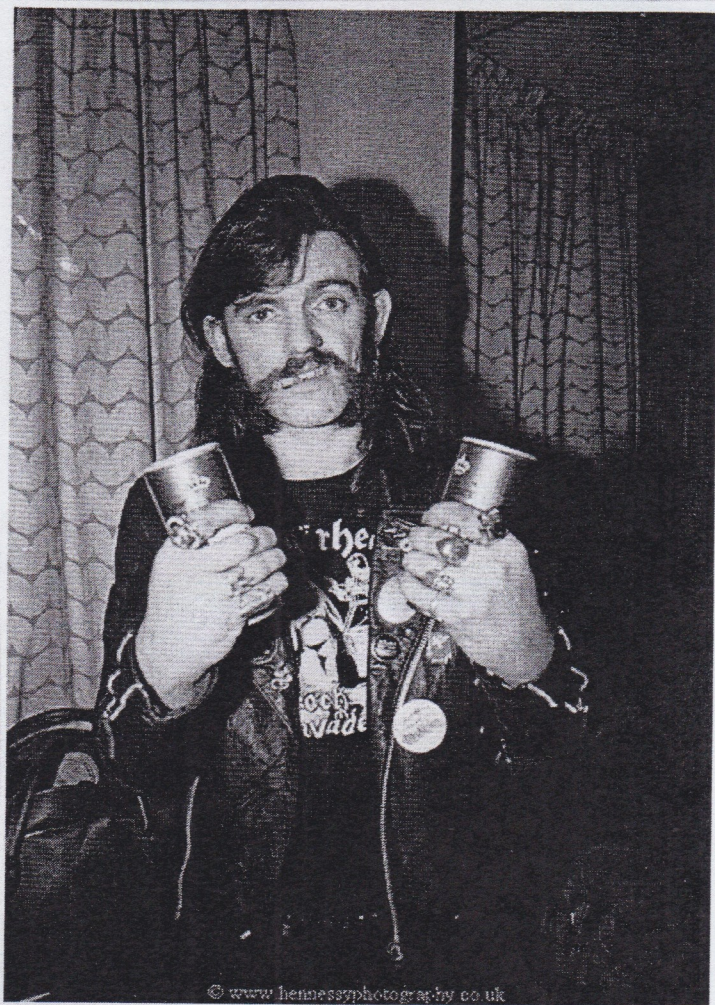


13. Sticking to similar aesthetics. Looks more like a **HARD ONS** record. Saying that, I actually like this - all '60s covers, played with various levels of passionless gusto. I especially like the version of the **AMBOY DUKES** classic 'Journey to the Center of the Mind'.

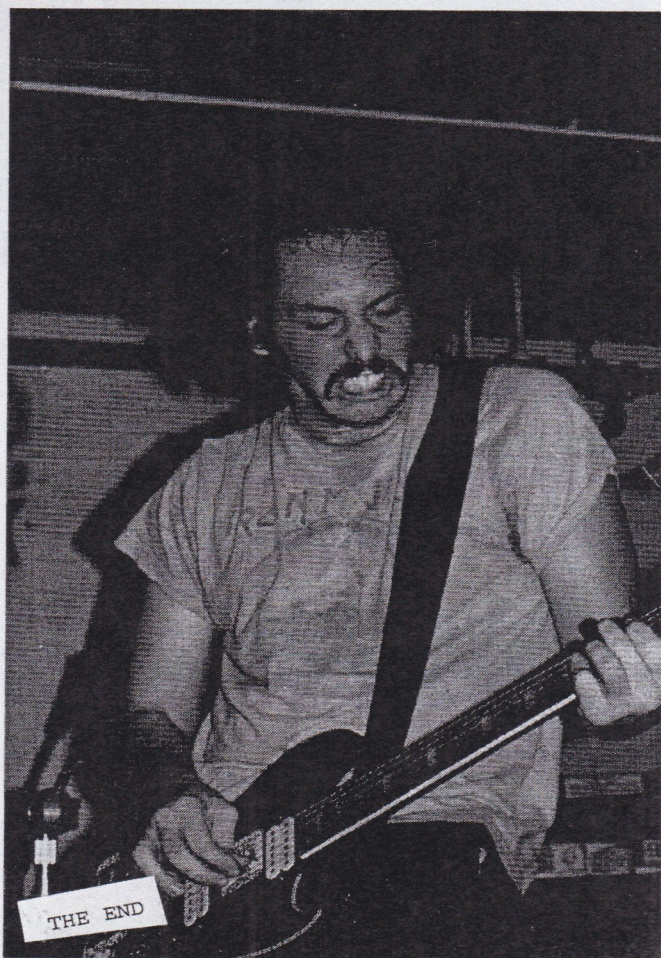


14. What better way to mark the end of a magnificent band's career by producing one of the worst album covers in existence? What the internet says: "The album cover is a digitally altered version of a painting by artist Mark Kostabi, named Enasaurs". NO MORE WORDS NEEDED (besides the fact that the Tom Waits cover is actually good, and other songs might be but I've never listened to it properly)

CLAY RECORDS 26, HOPE STREET, HANL

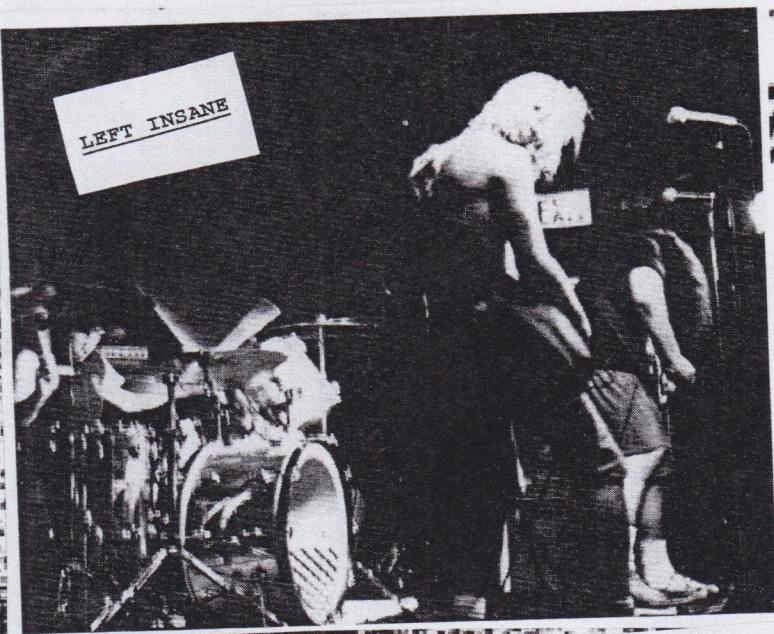


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THE END

LEFT INSANE



ZE RECORD

A fairly recent discovery for me, **LEFT INSANE** have been a staple on my record player over the last 6 months. Instrumental music of this style is a hard thing to pull off, and about as niche a sub-sub-sub-genre as you can really get. I know less than a handful of people who can appreciate *Process of Weeding Out* for example, and although the excellent **GORE** had the Southern Lord endorsement they still don't generate enough praise.

Indeed, **LEFT INSANE** can be likened to bands like **GORE**, but also **BLIND IDIOT GOD**, early **GONE** and **BL'AST**. What's missing here? Oh yeah...**BLACK FLAG**! They're obviously the main reference point, and both **LEFT INSANE** records, the *Tool Box* LP and self-titled 7", sound like they easily could have been released on SST circa 85-89. The drums follow a similar driving approach, while the guitar explores all the avenues of Ginn-dexterity, from circular repetitious merry-go-round disorientation (as on 'What You Deserve') to creeping **SABBATH**-loving dirges (as on 'Anastasia'). Indeed, it's likely they were into **ALICE COOPER BAND** and *Hotter Than Hell*-era **KISS** as much as any punk record, like many of their SST relatives.



There are other explanations for these musical connections. Their drummer Tony Cicero was from the incredible **SACCHARINE TRUST** (most recently providing drums on the *DRY ROT Philistine* LP, building up a damn good résumé overall), while their original bass player and producer was Stephen Egerton from **THE DESCENDENTS**. At times **LEFT INSANE** do indeed sound like the most **FLAG** sounding moments of later **DESCENDENTS** but without any of that distracting scatological humour. And for the weak willed who only like music with vocals to hum along to, **LEFT INSANE** aren't a completely instrumental band. 2 songs on the LP have vocals, the opener 'Neck Deep' sounding the most like later **FLAG** with its 'Rollins-but-not-Rollins' vocal style, a high point on the record.

What **LEFT INSANE** understand best is the tension that's immanent in both **FLAG** and **BL'AST**, utilising the same kind of rhythmic control that seamlessly moves from loose rocking sections to taut holds that evoke the holding of breath before release - you know, those bits where the cymbals and guitar strings are held for a split second in high tension before returning to the drive. This same approach has been best understood and utilised later by **PISSED JEANS**, **SNAKE APARTMENT**, **MOB RULES** and few others.

LEFT INSANE are more successful than the similar **VIRULENCE** (pre-**FU MANCHU**), who go for the exact same sound but without having the songs to really fulfil their potential (still recommended though). At their best, **LEFT INSANE** reminds me of **MELVINS'S** *Gluey Porch Treatments*, with a similar muscular dexterity and a completely does-not-give-a-fuck hard rock sensibility...

I doubt I'll get many converts to this band, but I can't get enough right now. It's music-for-music's sake, unashamedly self-indulgent and peculiarly catchy and memorable. And it's a curveball for a label like **Nemesis**, known mostly for releasing third-tier youth crew (**WALK PROUD**, **INSTED** etc). It has none of the sloganeering appeals to brotherhood or friendship, the staple of this Californian scene they were associated with. How could it!? A guitar can't tell you to **STAND TOGETHER** or **MAKE AN EFFORT**. A guitar is indifferent to your feelings.
THE END

SPECIAL! THE TOWN OF CORNDOGS

PEDRO ROCKING
THE ROCK AND ROLL MAGAZINE

CIRCUS
THE 1990s & BEYOND
free party

LIVE music by:

SWA 5:00
back, as a trio (find out...)

D.C.3 3:00
back by popular demand!

LEFT INSANE 7:00
new lp in the works

featuring and d.e.x of d.c.3

off the 110 harbor tow.
s. left on gaffey
right on 16th st.
781 16th st.
in backyard

SUN. MAY 27
781 16th st.
pedro

paul, gomez and tony of

REVIEWS

Unfortunately I didn't manage to review the **KIM PHUC Copsucker LP** which was a favourite of the last year. Maybe next time.



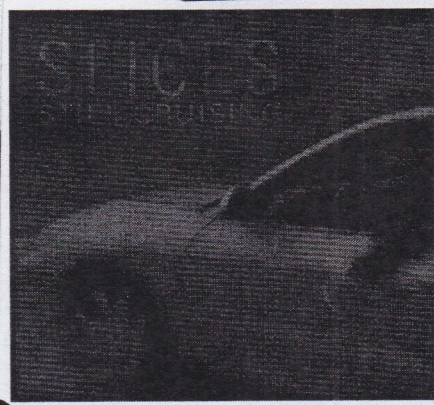
CRAZY SPIRIT: s/t 12" (Toxic State Records)

I've come round to this LP in a big way after playing shows with these krazee sprites a few times recently on their Euro tour. Hearing these new songs live, they just made more sense, getting stuck in my head for days. I'm not sure if it's redundant to describe their sound since the hype machine works efficiently these days. The demo and 7" were commonly compared to **CHEETAH CHROME MOTHERFUCKERS**, at least vocally, and musically to '80s USHC in its 'weirder' forms. While such comparisons hit the mark I think a lot of it was down to affected production, something they've tempered on this 12" which does a better job at capturing their live sound. In particular the vocals are raspier and more 'straight forward'. Without relying on distorted immersion, the catchiness of the songs is able to shine through, the key being Eugene's single-note guitar runs. The signature Marmite drumming remains too, a galloping tom-heavy style that reminds me more of the intros to various UK82 7"s than any rockabilly. The rhythms are used in a pretty original way, geared essentially towards keeping the energy of the music as high as possible, without relying on contrived slam sections. What's best about such a record is that it demonstrates that hardcore in 2012 can still be an exciting and original musical force, borrowing from, but not necessarily re-enacting, its past glories. Highlights include 'Bed Bugs', 'Little Boots' and 'Baseball Bat'.

BELGRADO: s/t LP (Discos Enfermos/Static Age)

One of my favourite punk records of last year. A friend described Barcelona's **BELGRADO** as being like a cartoon late-'70s punk band, the type you'd see playing in the party scene of a sub-par TV show, perhaps made up of session musicians imagining what punk sounded like. I don't think this was meant as a criticism and I can see their point. **BELGRADO** have a 'classic' sound with a slight pop sensibility that's both irresistible and kind of rare nowadays. Classic

SIOUXIE AND THE BANSHEES come to mind immediately, along with Brit post-punk stuff like **GIRLS AT OUR BEST**, but also Neue Deutsche Welle bands like the great **ABWÄRTS**. There's definitely a 'goth' element too, but it's somewhat peripheral; really more an adherence to a cold repetition and atmospheric tension, which might appeal to fans of **WARSAW/JOY DIVISION**. The 2 most significant elements are the female singer's soaring and repetitive vocal lines and the guitarist's excessive use of chorus and reverb. Each song builds upon a simple riff held together by the bass, usually leading into a catchy crescendo chorus. Disco beats are scattered liberally without shame (similarly found on that great **DESKONOCIDOS LP**). Unsurprisingly it's usually described as 'post-punk', but really I think it has a lot of the ingredients of '77 punk in its more diverse forms. The 'first wave' wasn't as generic as smug-faced music critics like to suggest, 'post-punk' often used as a catch-all phrase to describe any early band who didn't just sound like a copycat **CLASH** or **PISTOLS**... I'm sure there are Spanish influences in **BELGRADO'S** sound too but I'm too ignorant to pick up on them. Great record, and they lived up to it live when I saw them. I just really hate the font choice on the front cover.



SLICES: Still Cruising LP (Iron Lung Records)

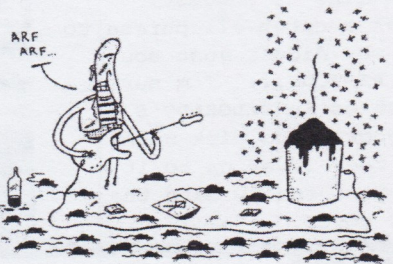
Two years on and Pittsburgh's **SLICES** are still cruising in that fucking car. I was told the band started out as a noise project, only slowly evolving into a hardcore band. This isn't hard to believe, especially

in light of the 'soundscape' parts on their debut LP. At the same time, you wonder how people with a background in noise could manage to create such memorable punk music. I'd say **SLICES** were one of the key bands in pushing the 'late **BLACK FLAG** meets noise-rock' hardcore onslaught of a few years ago; a post-millennial hardcore style within its own right (I wonder if in 20 years time retro bands will start emulating it?) **SLICES** do the style better than most, incorporating disparate influences into a seamless whole that's still unashamedly **HARDCORE**. And while the first LP was a grower, this one is more immediate with less filler and more focused song-writing. Opening with a deceptive 60 seconds that makes you expect **SAINT VITUS** style doom, this is an album of powerful and rocking hardcore, the punk elements more prominent than previously. The songs are catchy and memorable and there are even some riffs that approach **SLADE**-style boogie-woogie. Hell, songs like 'Slices Is Dirts' are nearly anthemic, and that's a word I

hate to use (bringing to mind dogshit like **YOUTH BRIGADE**, BYO not DC). Elsewhere things are faster and more direct, vicious cuts like 'Mustard' and 'Human Resources' pointing to the almost Boston '82 sound they had on their first 7". The noise-rock element remains too, most prominently the **JESUS LIZARD/PISSED JEANS** vibes in 'Horse Race' and 'All My Life'. Iron Lung Records just keeps churning out the quality.

AMIGO BLAS

TESOROS IDIOTAS PARA IDIOTAS COMO USFED. N° 13. ABRIL 2012. LA PUBLICACIÓN SE ACOMPAÑA DE UN EP DE LA BANDA SUDOR.



That's how **SUDOR** introduced one of their songs when I saw them live the other month, just about perfectly summing up their music and vibe. No frills hardcore punk from Spain's recent wave of quality bands, with an energy and drive that's rarer than it should be. Yeah, some of these records are years old now, but I still wanted to write about them after seeing them live. Taking cues from **DISCHARGE** (yes, them again), for the most part it's really just 3 or 4 chord basic hardcore that's all about strumming the chords as fast as you can and working up a delirious frenzy (fittingly the band's name translates to mean 'sweat'). Total **JERRY'S KIDS** vibes live, with the guitarist/singer dispelling the notion that you need a separate vocalist to sustain the energy. Onto the records. Although **CRIMEN DE ESTADO** are decent, **SUDOR** definitely win on their split. One of my favourite songs of theirs is 'Tu Puedes ser el Siguientes' (according to online translation, You Can Be The Following), a solid 'State Violence State Control' style stomper. Their latest, the *Amigo Blas 7"*, is a good an introduction as any, hot off the presses and accompanied by a Spanish language zine that I don't understand. It near-perfectly captures their live sound, with some of their catchiest songs included too. I've written about how good the Spanish language is for hardcore in previous issues, so I won't go into that again. Just check this band out if you haven't already. VIVA EL SUDOR.

SUDOR: split w/ CRIMEN DE ESTADO (Mal Sonido Records), *Ciudad Imperial 7"* (Solo Para Punks) and *Amigo Blas 7"* (Solo Para Punks)

'This song is about being punk, and doing things that make you puke'

HEROIN DIET demo tape

Lo-and-behold, Manchester have produced a good modern hardcore band (offense intended to all other Manchester hardcore bands). They've even been played on BBC Radio 6 by Stuart Marconie, which only makes me think he'll play anything from Manchester (no disrespect to **HD**, I just doubt the guy has any real interest in this style of music, even if his radio buddy Mark Radcliffe was in pre-Nazi **SKREWDRIVER** for a bit). All in all fairly solid stuff, with odd production that is somewhat distracting but easily forgivable. The influence of post-2000 hardcore is clear to hear, with bands like **COLD SWEAT** and **SEX VID** the most obvious reference points, but with another foot firmly in '80s influences with a scrappy guitar style and treble-heavy opposition to sounding "heavy". The drums are perhaps the only weak link. When Live they actually remind me more of bands like **NASA SPACE UNIVERSE**, which is a good thing. Interested at what comes next.

VIOLENT FUTURE s/t tape (Sorry State Records)

VIOLENT FUTURE are another product of Toronto's fertile hardcore scene, playing a kind of mid-paced stomp that's aimed solely at pleasing fans of **LAST RIGHTS** and **DYS**, with a bit of NY '82 for good measure. It shares a band member with **URBAN BLIGHT** and it doesn't actually sound all that different, it just doesn't have the fast songs. Not much more to say, all in all a good tape. Get a copy!



CONFRONT: The Curtain of an Intense Attack 7" (Not Very Nice/General Speech Records)

In all honesty, the other **CONFRONT 7"** is a Clevo favourite. Dumb music, dumb lyrics, everything good about that style of hardcore. The prospect of another band of the

same name being nearly as good? Doubtful, but I'm open to the possibility. This **CONFRONT** are from Japan, and offer up something completely different. A pummelling Japanese hardcore power-trio that reminds me of late '80s/early '90s bands like **INSANE YOUTH**, **RAISE CAIN** and **DONDON**; the kind of unrelenting burly and powerful hardcore that has very little of the Burning Spirits frills or blown-out crust trappings. You get 4 songs in all, with instrumental 'prologues' and 'epilogues' that actually work well. As standard, most of the lyrics are in Japanese with the odd line in English - 'EMPTY WORLD!', 'MAN BRANDISHING POWERS, THE RULER'S UGLY AMBITION' and so on. Fucking great.

DEAF MUTATIONS

PUNK

1. CRASH THE CLUBS
2. MUTATION SHUFFLE
3. MY FEELS PT. 1

DEAF//CRASH U-CAT
4/14/87//12. P.146
THANKS//R. BROWN
DEAF//L. MCNALLY

all 11 tracks on 12" 45 RPM

Recorded by J. Polce at Vancouver Factory April/May 1987

Mass thanks to the following: (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44) (45) (46) (47) (48) (49) (50) (51) (52) (53) (54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62) (63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80) (81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98) (99) (100) (101) (102) (103) (104) (105) (106) (107) (108) (109) (110) (111) (112) (113) (114) (115) (116) (117) (118) (119) (120) (121) (122) (123) (124) (125) (126) (127) (128) (129) (130) (131) (132) (133) (134) (135) (136) (137) (138) (139) (140) (141) (142) (143) (144) (145) (146) (147) (148) (149) (150) (151) (152) (153) (154) (155) (156) (157) (158) (159) (160) (161) (162) (163) (164) (165) (166) (167) (168) (169) (170) (171) (172) (173) (174) (175) (176) (177) (178) (179) 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STATIC SHOCK RECORDS

DEAF MUTATIONS:
Crash the Clubs 7"
(Static Shock
Records)

BROWN SUGAR: Tropical Disease 7" (Fashionable Idiots)

BS (no, not BOSTON STRANGLER) released one of my favourite LPs last year, and this follow-up is no slouch either. They've been getting praise from all over recently, as well as a fair amount of "I don't get it" reactions. Well, I know where I stand. This 7" opens with a 'catchy punk hit' that reminds me a little of ANGRY SAMOANS, before returning to the kind of effortless sounding hardcore they got so right on the LP. 'Outside' influences veer in and out, one song having a '60s garage dance-hall riff that could even get your parents who hate hardcore up and dancing (maybe/probably not). Ultimately BROWN SUGAR are developing their own sound, and it's one I personally can't get enough of. For all its cross-genre hints, it's really still hardcore punk at its most essential. Now I hope they manage another LP as good as the last one, and maybe a Euro tour before imploding...

A Toronto tape offering from a few years back, given the vinyl treatment last year. Led by Dave Brown from CAREER SUICIDE (one of my favourite bands of the '00s), DEAF MUTATIONS stalk somewhat similar territory, giving us mildly blown-out hardcore in the FU'S/JERRY'S KIDS vein, with a stomper on the A-side and 2 faster cuts on the flip. There's a desperation to the vocals and an intensity to the whole thing that elevates it above being generic. The title track really is a punk smash-hit, a paean to the anti-disco KBD punk classics of yesteryear but without the retro-pastiche vibe of that IDI AMIN AND THE AMPUTEES record. As an aside, what did early punks hate so much about disco? Was it a) because it's what the popular kids liked at their schools, b) an avenue for their vague homophobia, c) 'it's a race thing', or d) all of the above? Perhaps not something to think about for too long. Seriously, this is a great fucking record and a further addition to Static Shock's growing discography of quality.

MUCH WORSE: Absolute Nightmare 7" (No Way Records)

Definitely a somewhat minor hardcore 7" from this US band, but a fairly good one nonetheless. I think MUCH WORSE are heavily influenced by Japanese hardcore, stuff like NIGHTMARE and GAUZE, which you can definitely hear in the riffs, but combined with a solidly American modern hardcore sound that I guess makes them a bit like 9 SHOCKS TERROR (I actually think a lot of the time Japanese hardcore influences don't really work or translate in American bands, the disappointing LOTUS FUCKER being a good example). Lots of drum rolls and a powerful sound, with the occasional slower lurches to relieve the tension. The singer actually reminds me of Shaun from COLD SWEAT in parts. It's just a little generic musically, with not much variation between songs. And it's just a shame they went with such typically obtuse throw-together artwork, some white blurs on a black background in what The Internet would call the 'mystery guy hardcore' tradition. Oh well, it could be much worse (groan).



THE LOWEST FORM Some Horrible Bug tape (Low Records)

Yeah this came out ages ago, who cares? I interviewed them in this issue so might as well review the tape. Question 1. What is the lowest form of human life? A pro-life campaigner? An unrepentant serial sex offender? A seal clubber? A hardcore zine writer? The sound of London's THE LOWEST FORM seems inspired by a humanity at its most miserable and desperate. It's hardcore punk in one of its more negative sub-forms, but without falling into the trappings of pretend nihilistic bands who end up sounding like either HATEBREED or bottom-of-the-barrel black metal. TLF are clearly not about sunshine and lollipops (although band members may well be in an experimental side project conceptually dedicated to such phenomena). It's a sound comparable to DIE KREUZEN, VOID and all the classics, with the most obvious modern comparison being the first SEX VID 7". But it's not derivative, it just shares a similar wild and relentless approach with such bands. Guitar textures and effects are utilised to add to the overall affect, and myriad 'non-punk' influences are obviously there but never saturating. Sometimes they approach blast-beat territory but without becoming power violence. The whole thing is effectively geared towards inducing the 'fist-clench', the truest form of expression for the average inhibited hardcore fan (that is, after the 'mind-mosh'). The closing song's a real highlight, with an odd grinding rhythm that's nearly industrial with creepy, lecherous vocals oozing all over. I can't wait to hear their next recordings.

LONG PIGS: s/t 7" (SMRT Records)

I reviewed the **LONG PIGS** demo in the last issue and said it sounded like early **DRI**. Well, this doesn't, although their influence is still present, especially on the speedy opener 'Cut Off'. What you get instead is warped and noisy hardcore reminding me a little of the snottier moments of **ANNIHILATION TIME** (both in vocals and the single-note riffing) and Clevo bands like **RUINERS**. They're from the same group of New York bands as **CRAZY SPIRIT** and **DAWN OF HUMANS**, and I don't know if they share members but there's definitely a similarity there. I don't want to sell this short through comparisons, because it does have its own sound, albeit one rooted in the snottier end of '80s hardcore influences, with wailing feedback and sneered vocals. 'No Tolerance' and 'Death is Death' are the 2 main hits for sure.

WALLS: The Future is Wide Open LP (Iron Lung Records)

I hate **NEUROSIS**. I went through a period a few years ago when I thought I could get into them, but it was pretty short-lived. There's something about them I just can't stand, and equally I tend to reject anything that reminds me of them (the **NEUROSIS** guy does singer-songwriter stuff now? No surprise. Pass me the bucket). This might have been the reason I couldn't really get into the first **WALLS** LP. The mood was there, I just couldn't get those unavoidable **NEUROSIS** comparisons out of my head. Well luckily they managed to shed any similarities on the follow up 12", and now they're a distant memory on this LP. *The Future is Wide Open* pretty much sounds like **COLD SWEAT** v.2.0, with Nick Turner's trademark dissonant 'against-the-notes' guitar playing being the central attraction. And that's just fine, **COLD SWEAT** being one of my favourite bands from the '00s. The overdriven bass (**GRAND FUCK** echoes) and ever-reliable drum powers of Jensen Ward (**IRON LUNG** etc) complete the picture. One of the main step-ups from their previous records is August Alston's vocals (previously in **LORDS OF LIGHT** and loads other bands), as he seems to have settled on just the right style; not too gruff nor too screamy, with enough clarity to hear what he's saying. For the uninitiated, **WALLS** play a style of heavy, powerful hardcore that's equally as indebted to 'noise-rock' (bands like **UNSAFE** and **CHERUBS** especially), veering from fast numbers like 'Just Complain' and 'Positive Thoughts Is Not Making a Deal With Death' to slower repetitive dirges like 'Slow Erase' and 'A Piece of Rope'. Songs like 'Pure Hate (aka Fraud)' employ the odd lurching rhythms of October File-era **DIE KREUZEN**, while early **SWANS** influences creep in all over. I guess you could call this hardcore for music nerds, with a sound and lyrical content unlikely to appeal to anyone who's into the genre to make up for social deficiencies or to feel better about their lives (**STAY POSITIVE, BE PART OF THE BROTHERHOOD, KILL YOURSELF**). Great record.

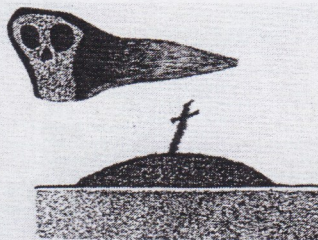
NO: s/t 12" (Static Shock Records)



I can't believe the name **NO** hadn't been used by a hardcore band before. Simplistic inspiration.

This is the follow up to 2 tapes released over the last year or so by this London-based band, and it marks a real step up. Previously I wrote that they were taking cues (intentionally or not) from bands like **TAR BABIES** and **MECHT MENSCH**, and this remains; fast energetic hardcore punk grounded in mainly US influences, but also with enough drive and power to please fans of **DESTINO FINAL** and the like. With raspy vocals and overdriven guitars, the songs follow a fast and unrelenting pattern that's almost hypnotic. This same repetitive, hypnotic quality is found on the slower tracks, which I can envisage rooms of socially awkward misfits getting rowdy to (I'm looking forward to the next opportunity of seeing them live). Weirdly, the whole thing has a duplicitous quality in sounding ultra-modern and dare I say 'slick' while retaining its messy and chaotic qualities; perhaps the result of being recorded by the same guy who did **ELECTRIC WIZARD'S** doom classic *Dopethrone*! Seriously good music, and one of the best UK hardcore records to be released in a while.

KREMLIN: Unscrewed demo and Will You Feed Me? 7" (Hardware Records)



On their demo, Canada's **KREMLIN** (featuring a **SCHOOL JERK** or two) play 'traditional' hardcore punk that reminds me of

Midwest classics with a little bit of a *Victim In Pain* vibe. Real basic but in a good way; a tape for people who like hardcore bands that nobody from 'outside' of hardcore really like, if you know what I mean. However, the *Will You Feed Me? 7"* is even better, being one of the best new hardcore records to come my way in a while. It expands on the demo with a fuller, warmer sound, a firm grasp on utilizing different guitar textures and more memorable, well-written songs. It's actually hard to explain what's so good about it, it just manages to tick all the boxes for what I want in a hardcore record in 2012. As for reference points I'd say it sounds like **BATTALION OF SAINTS'S** *Second Coming* meets modern Spanish offerings by bands like **GLAM**, with a slightly gruff UK feel in parts (early **CHAOS UK**). There is reverb on the vocals but nothing overpowering, and the guitars relentlessly squeal and scrape to power things along. The last song 'Forced March' is my favourite and a likely inclusion on any hardcore mixes I make in the near future.

NEMESIS: Dou-Koku 7" (Solar Funeral Records)

Another great recent 7" from Japan (but on a US label), **NEMESIS** are mining the other side of the '90s Japanese hardcore sound than **CONFRONT**, sharing the rabid-spat vocal style and relentless juggernaut speed of bands like **WARHEAD**. It also reminds me of **ORGANISM'S Hope** LP from a couple of years ago. Blown-out but not to a **CONFUSE** degree, there's no D-beat here, no distortion to deafness, just well written hardcore with catchy riffs. The b-side in particularly good, with the last song reminding me of **GAUZE** (you know, with a riff like DAH NAH NAAAAAAHHH DAH NAH NAAAAAAHHHH). I also love the echo-heavy tom sound, making them sound like a fucking army charging at the enemy, like in Kurosawa's **RAN** or **KAGEMUSHA** (or really any film that features huge foot-soldier armies - I've just used these examples because I like tenuous cultural comparisons based on nationality). Creating music that can't really be emulated by Western copycats, **NEMESIS** are helping to fulfil my seemingly endless hunger for undiluted, even 'generic' Japanese hardcore. More please.

NO FUCKER: Demos box set (W-Tapes).

Ahh D-beat. Its loudest detractors are made all the worse due to their usual appreciation of music that's just as generic and prosaic. Of course most of the bands playing the style are awful, but the same can be said of every musical sub-sub-genre without doubt. Luckily there's bands like **NO FUCKER** to be the exception that proves the rule.

Unlike other modern bands that stand more on the margins of D-beat, like **DESTINO FINAL** or **HERATYS**, **NO FUCKER** went full (nuclear armed) hog for the sound but to good effect. Building on a diet of (you guessed it) **DISCHARGE**, **DISCLOSE** (who they cover on one of these tapes) and earlier D-alike bands like Bradford's own **DISASTER** (whose excellent LP was recently reissued by La Vida Es Un Mus), **NO FUCKER** created a powerful take on the genre conventions while retaining a distinctiveness that set them apart from the stinking mass (what would 'crowd theorists' like Canetti and Ortega Y Gasset make of such reductive, lowest-common-denominator art, made by the herd in matching jackets?) What you get here are 2 of their earliest demos (*No Flesh Shall Be Spared* from 2003 and *Peace, They Hate The Very Word* from 2002) put together in a handy VHS-style plastic box, like all those noise tapes you bought and never listened to. Fucking perfect. Also check out **HERPES**, the latest band to be spawned from **NO FUCKER'S** ashes.

FRONT LINE

BASIC TRAINING E.P.

FRONT LINE:
Basic Training
7" (Beach
Impediment
Records).

I don't buy every reissue of a 'forgotten' '80s hardcore record or demo. Usually there's a reason they've been neglected over the years. How long before the well runs

dry? When will the next 'fake' '82 basement recording be unleashed by members of an average contemporary hardcore band as 'revenge' for not being chosen to play Chaos in Tejas? Luckily this particular reissue delivers. I grabbed a copy because I already knew VA's **FRONT LINE** (who later morphed into **GOD'S WILL**) from the classic *Master Tape* comp vol 2. Like the other bands on the same comps, their music epitomises the '82/'83 sound of USHC as it crept out of the Midwest and South Atlantic, well away from the hipper and more popular big coastal scenes. For the most part such bands played a wild, raw and energetic style of basement hardcore that burned for a brief period before imploding. This welcome reissue captures such a flash of power, the sound of All American Hardcore. This is **FRONT LINE'S** 2nd demo, which the *Master Tape* songs were also culled from. It sounds like a slightly more together **WHITE CROSS** (also from VA) with a hint of **MECHT MENSCH'S** tempo changes and catchy sensibility. It also has obligatory squealing and disjointed guitar wails throughout, reminding me a little of **STATE**. The lyrics are also great, one song summing up the petty regional rivalries that hardcore bands thrived on, in its hatred of neighbouring Pennsylvania ("they have a goofy accent that makes them talk so weird"). It won't change your life and it probably won't change people's minds who aren't swayed by this style of USHC, but for those who know this is IT. A welcome reissue from the label ran by Mark of VA's own **WASTED TIME**, a much missed band who shared an affinity with such groups.

And for the sake of it, here's that picture of a young Jon Stewart moshing to **FRONT LINE**:



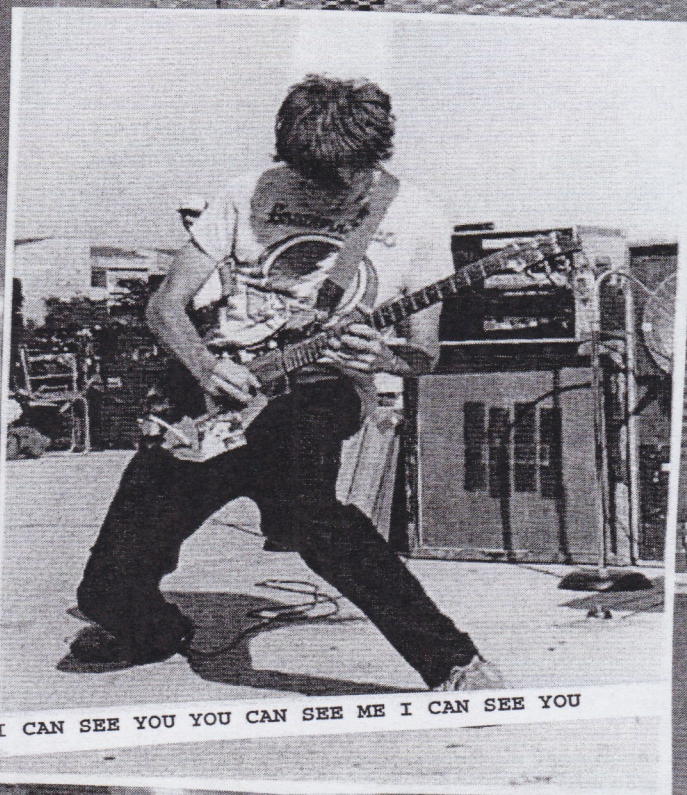
BAD NOIDS are a group of teenagers from Cleveland Ohio, a breeding ground of scum-punk gems. This is real crude shit, the opener establishing their locale in sounding like **ELECTRIC EELS** jamming **H100s** songs, while the speedy follow up has a stronger Japanese hardcore vibe. But the whole thing is just really inept and stupidly catchy. I fucking love it. The **EELS** thing is mainly in the vocals, real whiny and slightly disconcerting at the same time. Remember when you loved a hardcore record that wasn't self-consciously smart or intentionally dumb? When it just made you want to run around and not give a fuck? Yeah, this is one of them. The closer 'My Country' even has a harmonica and it doesn't sound stupid (or maybe it does?) The cover has pieces of toast holding knives, and a guy with a toaster for a head.



FLIP SHIT:
Outgoing
Rockers 7"
(Reel Time
Records)

A nice surprise. Coming from Rochester NY (same stamping ground as **RATIONAL ANIMALS** and the Rotcore bands), I expected this record to be some stale power-pop retro trip judging from the logo, cover, centre-label and admittedly great insert (printed to look like it was written in pencil on lined paper, lipstick marks included). I GUESS YOU FOOLED ME, THE RUSE SUCCEEDED... **FLIP SHIT** (bad name, sorry) actually play US hardcore punk in the vein of early **ANGRY SAMOANS** but with a bit of *This Is Boston Not LA* for good measure. The contemporary band they most remind me of is **BROWN SUGAR** from relatively-nearby Buffalo, sharing a very similar snotty semi-spoken slurred vocal style and catchy "we don't just listen to hardcore" guitar lines. I wonder if this style of hardcore is going to be the next big trend? Or perhaps without an easy image to latch onto or mosh parts to feel tough to, it won't appeal to more than a few. Either way, it's a solid product that a lot of work has gone into (both music and packaging). 'Stoop Rock' is probably the highlight.

THE END.





Rochester's **RATIONAL ANIMALS** are a contemporary favourite, even if loads of people I know don't like them (it seems the vocals are the sticking point). They share an affinity with all the best punk bands from past and present who prefer to embrace rather than reject rock music in all its glory, without pretending punk was somehow separate from it. I asked them a few things.

*1. First thing's first, how did **RATIONAL ANIMALS** form? Did you all know each other beforehand and did you play in any other bands together? Have you grown to dislike each other since starting, hiding it beneath friendly but indifferent demeanours? Or are all you all best friends?*

Cam: Hah! Well, **RATIONAL ANIMALS** started in 2007 while 3/4th of us were still in High School. Will, Rich, and I started jamming in my mom's basement and we wrote a few cool songs. Zach was singing in a band called **WHOM THEY DESTROY** at the time and we liked his style a lot so we asked him to sing for the band. I currently play drums for another band, **BAD TASTE** (Rich also played with us briefly), and I used to play in **WOMBAT SYNDROME**, **THE INDUCERS** and **EVERYTHING FALLS APART** out of Buffalo. Rich used to play with **INSUBORDINATES**. Zach also played in **FATALITY**. Will had a band called **HARRISON BERGERON** a LONG time ago... Pretty big family tree I guess!

As for the last part of your question... I'd say we're all real cool with each other ya know? I've seen a lot of other bands crumble from differing personalities and ideas with the band, but I think that we use that aspect to our advantage. Each member brings something different and it gives us a very unique aesthetic. Yeah, we get into arguments, but we're all buds and we were all good friends before we started the band, which helps us stay in check.

Zack: I knew these guys from other bands we had been in, playing around town and hanging out. They asked me to sing for them. I was in some other band also but it didn't seem like that was going to last because of creative differences, so I moved onto something else. It was kind of weird for a minute. I've always liked everybody in this band. I'm a difficult person by nature and I know it better now, so I try not to piss them off too much.

Richie: I've known Cam and Will since 2nd or 3rd grade but didn't actually become friends with them till 7th grade. Zack and I didn't meet until I was in high school where we saw him sing for another band. I didn't know Zack and was new to the whole band thing so I was down for whatever. I was only playing bass for a year or two when we started so I was lucky that everyone else had some experience. We're all still friends.

2. Explain 'bock rock' in 10 words or less.

Cam: Good time rock n' roll party.

Zack: The precursor to 'Swamp Rock'.

Richie: Top notch R'n'R.



3. For British readers, try and describe Rochester. What does an average Saturday night look like? Were you all brought up in the area or did you migrate there? And what other bands from there are worth checking out?

Cam: Ha. It really depends on who you're hanging out with. Rochester likes to party ya know? Saturday means fun and everyone in town is looking for fun.

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9:30

People like to get into trouble and freak out and stuff. It's a weird place here, you really gotta see it to believe it. But yeah, we're all from Rochester, born and raised. Will lives in Brooklyn now, but he's a Rochester freak whether he wants to admit it or not. As for other bands, two of my favorites have records dropping soon. **FLIP SHIT** and **DEATH CAMP** will have EP's out by the summer, and the recordings are fucking killer! Other great bands to check out are **THE NARCS**, **LOVE PORK**, **KING VITAMIN**, **TRIGLACTAGON**, **BEAST MAN**, **BRAIN CAR (RIP)**, **THE LOOGIES**. There's a bunch of cool shit going on.

Zack: People like to hangout in graveyards and in the deep woods on top of the hill, it's pretty spooky sometimes, I'd just rather stay home and read a book. We're all from here, most people don't move to Rochester to start bands. I've done most of the things there are to do, I usually just try to have a nice meal and a nice sleep on Saturday night most of the time. Western NY has a lot of great bands, it's a very eclectic scene it terms of "independent music." My favorite band in NY, perhaps even the entire U.S.A., is **BROWN SUGAR**.

Richie: It all depends on who you're hanging out with but it could be anything from going to the lake having beach fires to skating the usual spots downtown. There are also places like Mount Hope cemetery and the abandoned subway that's always fun to walk around in.

WEDNESDAY AUG 15

4. Do you feel connected to the wider New York punk/hardcore scenes, or is it really divided by region, city and style?

Cam: New York is absolutely divided up from city to city. You can drive one hour west (Buffalo) or east (Syracuse) and the scene is COMPLETELY different. People from other cities or towns don't usually go to shows in other cities, unless one of their local bands is playing out of town. Every city in Western NY has very

unique personalities and I believe people are products of that. Sometimes cities have feuds and sometimes they get along great. We do play in Brooklyn/NYC a lot, but we're like a 7 hour drive from there so I don't feel we're really associated with their scene at all.

Zack: I've never really tried to connect myself with a certain scene or style, I don't think this band has either. I go for a classic rock and roll style, it's a style for everybody. I think there are certain universal feelings that everyone can appreciate encompassed in that mindset. I think if you've got your own style and it's good that it will connect by itself. We've been lucky to connect with a lot of different scenes and met some great people around the U.S. and Canada. We've also been treated like shit and almost gotten killed, it hasn't been easy.

Richie: I think it's divided by the cities more than anything else. In each things will be totally different in terms of style of music and people. We play NYC a bunch too but I don't think we are connected to any one scene.



5. What are the main bands that influence **RATIONAL ANIMALS**, and how has it changed over time? Do you get sick of being called a '**BLACK FLAG** worship' band and do you think the label is misleading?

Cam: Yeah, the **BLACK FLAG** thing is ya know, getting kinda old. I don't know, most people with an online blog are pretty bad at writing in general so they have to pigeonhole stuff and say "Oh this band sounds like... this band and this

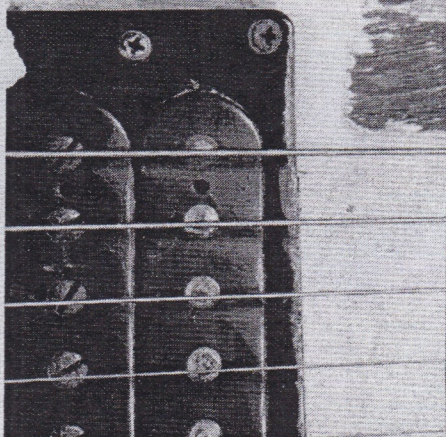
band is for fans of such and such band". I get it ya know, we have a **FLAG** influence and at first it was pretty intentional. We're all big fans of **BLACK FLAG**. But I think our newest record really doesn't play into that nearly as much. There's so much more to the album. If people are just simply labelling it a "**BLACK FLAG** Worship" record, they're really missing a lot that the album has to offer. But a lot of the influences vary in the band. I like a lot of '70's rock n' roll, like **KISS**, **THIN LIZZY**, **T REX** and stuff like that. But I was raised on punk. **THE RAMONES** are a big musical influence to us all. Probably a group favorite if I had to say. I've been digging a lot of harder stuff lately too. **CRO-MAGS**, **DISCHARGE**, **VENOM**... You get the idea.

Zack: It's discouraging to music listeners to make comparisons like that, and I wish it didn't happen as much. **BLACK FLAG** is a great band but there will never be another, despite encouragement of half-ass critics. I enjoy a very wide variety of music, my influences include mostly everything that falls under the umbrella of rock and roll. **LOU REED**, **FATS DOMINO**, **MOTORHEAD**, the list goes on.....

Richie: I think it's changed since our LP came out last year. I've also heard people tell me we sound like other bands like **BLACK SABBATH**, **MOTORHEAD** and **JESUS LIZARD**...

RATIONAL ANIMALS

WHITE WASH SALT LICK SOFTCORE



AUG 4, 2012 7:00 PM NEGATIVE SPACE (253 PRINCESS) \$0 ALL AGES

6. Call me crazy, but I think I hear some **SWIZ/JESUSEATER/SWEETBELLY FREAKDOWN** vibes in the band. Are you into any of Sean Brown's bands?

Cam: Ha, it must be a coincidence... Those aren't really bands that we're well versed in as a group.

Zack: You are crazy.

Richie: There's a band called Jesus..Eater?

7. Can you remember when you first discovered music and rock music in particular? Was it seeing a **KISS** video as a child or seeing a **NIRVANA** video as a teenager (giving up a promising future career in semi-professional sports for the call of the wild/guitar?) And from then on how did you get into punk and hardcore? Can you remember your first show?

Cam: Ha! Great question... I actually didn't get into **KISS** until I turned like 19, I hated them as a kid! (They're one of my favorite bands now) My brothers would listen to a lot of **GREEN DAY** when I was kid and that was really my first introduction to anything related to punk. While

my brothers grew out of anything of the sort, I really took a liking to music and discovered "real" punk around the 8th grade when my friend Eric showed me a **DEAD KENNEDYS** record. After that I discovered **BLACK FLAG**, **THE MISFITS**, **THE EXPLOITED**, **CRASS**, etc. But yeah, I remember my first show clear as day. It was the last show for a local band called **17TH CLASS**, a very influential band for Rochester at the time. The show was insane. It was 2003 and I was 13 years old. I'm pretty sure me and Will were the youngest people at the show.

Zack: My grandfather was a WWII veteran that ran a few restaurant/bars and was very into the Rat Pack, my parents are both hippies that used to take me on road trips and listen to rock and roll. That's the first music I remember hearing, I got into punk as a teenager. I started listening to the **RAMONES** and **BLACK FLAG** heavily. I started playing in bands and went to shows in Rochester with my band-mates, our parents would get mad because we would come home smelling like cigarettes. I remember my first show, this band threw a bunch of child toys out onto the floor and all the punks started stomping on the toys, it was cool I liked it.

Richie: I grew up living with my mom and she'd show me all my dad's records we had in our living room. The same year he graduated high school he went to Woodstock, so we have all those records like **SANTANA**, **HENDRIX**, **THE WHO**, plus others like **THE BEATLES**, **ZEPPELIN** etc. The first time I discovered music on my own was listening to **MINOR THREAT** when I was in 7th grade. After that I learned more about the kind of scene they were in and my love for '80's hardcore grew.

8. How did you choose the name? Are any of you Philosophy student drop-outs? And how important do you think having a good name is? (great bands with bad names, there's too many to mention...)

Cam: Zack thought of the name. The term was mentioned in one of his college classes and it stuck with him. He suggested the idea to us and we couldn't think of a damn thing better so it stuck!

Zack: I just liked the name because I thought it was something that could be applied on a universal level. I want to write songs about things that people can relate to, with a real feeling, it's important to stay in touch. That second part really depends on what you think a good name is.

9. Off on a tangent, but I'm listening to **GRAND FUNK'S** Live Album right now and wondering what the greatest live album ever might be. **DOUBLE LIVE GONZO**? **IT'S ALIVE**? **LIVE 84**? **SPACE RITUAL**? **RUST NEVER SLEEPS**? **LAND SPEED RECORD**? I think the live album is a neglected rock-form - what are your favourites? And would **RATIONAL ANIMALS** ever do a live album?

Cam: Man... **GRAND FUNK LIVE** album is fucking UP THERE. But if I had to pick just one, I'd have to go with *Kick Out The Jams* by **MC5**. A close second would be **KISS Alive...** Paul Stanley's stage banter is second to none! *Double Live Gonzo* is dope too. We actually did a live tape a few years ago. We only made 100 copies of them though and they sold out on our tour that year. I love the idea of doing a real deal live record though. People don't do that nowadays. Live albums are great and I think we'd really shine with one. We're a live band first, and I think if you've only heard our records you're missing out on half of what our band is. Live records are good at giving people not fortunate enough to see a band an idea of what their live show is like. It's important.



Zack: Our live tape may or may not be re-released, or maybe somebody will bootleg us another good recording, who knows?

Anyways...**GRAND FUNK** is a fucking heavy live album. Live rock albums are my favorite and have always been since I was a

teenager. I am into the **GRATEFUL DEAD** and I really enjoy the live recordings they did over the years the most; letting your fans record your live shows should be encouraged by bands unless it interferes with the show. Live recordings show your faults but they can also show moments that'll never happen again. Anyways my favorite live albums are the classic BBC sessions done by acts like **LED ZEPPELIN**, **THE BEATLES**, **THE WHO**, **JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE**, **DUSTY SPRINGFIELD**, **DEEP PURPLE**, **THE KINKS**... Currently my favorite live rock album is **ROY ORBISON'S Black and White Night**.

on records because when used correctly it can be a really good bridge between two songs, or an A side and a B side to a record. It's a cool tool to use sometimes. Whole instrumental records and bands are cool too. Obviously we've listened to *The Process of Weeding Out* before... But yeah, we have talked about the idea of an instrumental record. We've toyed around seriously with the idea of doing an instrumental single, which I feel would be a little more fitting because I think Zach's lyrics and voice are a very important part of the band, and a whole LP with no vocals wouldn't be giving the listener the full "Rational Animals Experience".

Zack: It works well for opening a live set after tuning, these guys can jam for a single riff for a fucking daze. As a listener I've felt short-changed by instrumental only records because I feel like a lot of the time the artists could write better songs if they weren't so self-centred on their playing or on so many drugs. I think that most of that stuff is blatantly flamboyant and incredibly boring unless I'm on drugs too, but that's just me. I think we would be short-changing ourselves to put out a record like that.

Richie: I would be into doing it but at the same time I wouldn't want to leave Zack out of any recording process or be able to not write lyrics for a song that could potentially have lyrics to it.

11. What was the last record you listened to before answering these questions, and what do you have to say about it?

Cam: Ha, the last album I listened to was *Pass the Dust, I Think I'm Bowie* by **BLACK RANDY AND THE METRO SQUAD**... Goddamn classic record.

Zack: I'm listening to this Lou Reed live recording from Italy in 1983, and trying to forget that he ever collaborated with **METALLICA**...

Richie: It was the **ALLMAN Brothers** S/t record and it kicks a lot of ass. Lots of heavy Rock.

THE END

Richie: I'd have to say its a split between Live '84 or this live **FATS DOMINO** record I own. Also anything that Jimi Hendrix has done I'm pretty much a fan of. I know at some point we would like to record a live LP.

10. I've seen a video where **RATIONAL ANIMALS** open the set with an instrumental song. What do you think of instrumental rock/punk (thinking **FLAG**, **LEFT INSANE**, **GORE**, **GONE** etc)? And would you ever consider doing a whole instrumental record?

Cam: Hmmm, yeah we all like the instrumental thing for some reason. I like instrumental songs





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The film writing is fairly thin in this issue. I've got no excuses other than the fact I haven't been watching so much lately.

DIRTY KRIEGER NIGHTMARE

CRONENBERG AKA VIDEO NIGHTMARES

Ah Cronenberg, one of Canada's greatest exports besides Neil Young and maple syrup. I've grown up with his films; pieces of artful nausea that continue to please after multiple relapses. I first saw all the classics on old battered videotapes, recorded from TV with the odd missing sequence (due to someone forgetting to un-pause the recording after advert breaks). Truly the perfect medium for his films.

I always associate Cronenberg with punk music, and it's more than just Debbie Harry getting fucked up in *Videodrome*. In the '70s and '80s, Cronenberg was essentially making the blueprint for the kinds of films that the establishment and 'concerns parents' hated. "How can you watch that stuff?" they'd say, echoing the question of "how can you listen to that stuff?" aimed at punk, metal and all these UGLY forms of music (that is, ugliness that doesn't have the bourgeois respectability of free-jazz or avant-garde classical or whatever). Of course Cronenberg is the darling of sophisticated art-film fans nowadays, with his latest (the Don DeLillo adaption *Cosmopolis*) the icing on the cake of his arthouse rehabilitation.

But it's easy to forget how much 'extreme' horror films were looked down upon before the 'postmodern' rehabilitation of previously marginal cultural products. The body-horror in Cronenberg's films is only less shocking today because of how far down the rabbit hole we've gone. With gross-out physical disgust a staple of contemporary Hollywood comedies, it's hard to be truly shocked or repulsed by an image of a sex slug in the bath. Therein lies the attraction of German straight-to-VHS goresploitation films made by nutjobs I suppose...

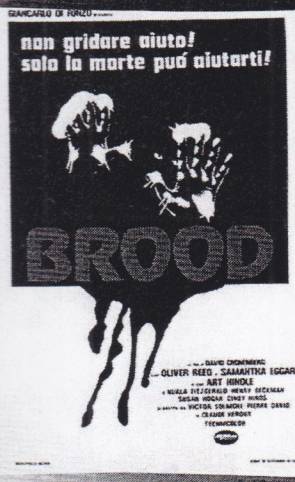
& from Troy:

Still, there's more to Cronenberg than shock. His films, many of them rejecting traditional narrative cohesion, get under your skin but also (gulp) into your mind. It goes without saying, but through the medium of B-movie horror and sci-fi he was exploring much 'loftier' themes; shame, sexual 'perversion', mass hysteria, consumerism, psychopathology, scientific experimentation, blah blah blah, while still focusing on his essential goal of making audiences feel uncomfortable, even physically repulsed by what they're seeing. Whether his treatments are always so serious minded is debatable, but there's no denying his films have a much more serious edge than the majority of contemporary sci-fi or monster movies...

What is body horror? The concept that elements within the body can take control of it, biological forces (a part of the body or an invader) independent from the supposed rational thought processes and decision-making powers of individuals; that things within us, whether parasitic slugs, insect-tumours or vampire armpits, can have a deranged agenda of their own, which we inevitably become slave to. These ideas are made all the more powerful by the corresponding developments going on in evolutionary genetics in the '80s, the view of genes rather than 'rationality' determining human behaviour gaining ground exponentially. Truly terrifying...

Along with body horror is Cronenberg's related theme of psychic horror, as in *Scanners* and *The Brood*. The latter follows the experience of a troubled woman whose repressed rage manifests itself in the form of violent and mutated children.





This of course allows Cronenberg to go to town in a gradual and creepy reveal of these creatures. But the power of its theme is pushed home through a sly indictment of the rising popularity of narcissistic and arguably destructive experimental therapies gaining ground in the '70s (like those explored in Adam Curtis's great documentary *All Watched Over By Machines of Love and Grace*). The whole thing is a clear analogy about primal scream therapy and the like. Rather than getting lost in the quasi-theological fantasies of other films about psychic phenomena, Cronenberg kept things within the realm of the clinical and pathological; the mind as part of the body, having the same potential to go beyond human limits but equally subject to disease and degeneration.

Beyond all this is just the quality of his films on every level, from the inspired fuck-your-brain visuals to the brooding pace moving towards ultra-violent schizoid splatter that intentionally never feels quite real; always dream-like, always sterile, often with incredible choices of set design and location (the apartment complex in *Shivers* is a fantastic setting - such cold expansive brutalism). For me, it's the classic 5 films that most define him: *Rabid*, *Shivers*, *Scanners*, *Videodrome* and *The Brood*. From the sex zombies and

birth of body-horror in *Shivers* to the psychedelic deconstruction of the techno-phallic video age in *Videodrome*, the guy knew what he was doing.

Instead of remaking **TOTAL RECALL**, Hollywood powers-that-be should have just lobbied for Cronenberg to finally film the screenplay he'd developed for it with William Hurt (can you imagine? FUCK). Let's face it, he should be heralded alongside Carpenter in the pantheon of all-time great (living) horror directors. It's just a shame that the latter cares more about campaigning on behalf of lost dog charities nowadays than making good films (**THE WARD?** FUCK OFF). Maybe he should collaborate with Greg Ginn and make a documentary about his cat sanctuary.

News just in. I just read that *Shivers* is being re-made for 2014. **FUCK THIS WORLD.**

DEMON SEED

Moving on from Cronenberg but still in similar territory, I'd like to say a few words about **DEMON SEED**, a film that's much better than its title might suggest, and probably my favourite 'robot' film.



DEMON SEED is one of the few films directed by the troubled Donald Cammel, who co-directed 1968's **PERFORMANCE** with Nicolas Roeg, and the giallo-esque **WHITE OF THE EYE** in the late '80s, before sadly topping himself (reportedly shooting himself in a way that wouldn't be immediately fatal, and then asking for a mirror so he could watch himself die...) I can't help but think that evidence of a troubled mind was already present with a film like **DEMON SEED** - a questionable suggestion but what the hell...

DEMON SEED is all about a computer controlled house that 'falls in love' with its occupant Susan Harris (played by Julie Christie), the wife of the scientist in charge of the local military-style base that holds the master-computer.

Now, it's hard to write about the film without spoiling its key 'twist', which is also shamefully given away on the back of the DVD release. Without full disclosure, I can say it's a film that explores the fine line between organic and synthetic, and the real or imagined distinctions between humans and machines. In line with Cronenberg, it not only envisages a future where human relationships have become as clinical and sterile as those between wires in an interface, but also provides a relatively graphic and experimental vision of a biological synthesis of the human body with technology. True body horror, in other words...

Add to this a clear socio-political dimension that's in line with feminist discourses developing around the time it was made. Despite its arguably far-fetched nature and schlock elements, it's still essentially a harrowing and upsetting filmed portrayal of the abuse of women, all done much more tastefully than you might expect, without too much voyeuristic complicity. It's a nightmare vision of technology as a complicit by-product of a misogynistic future society, exemplified at the very start by the division between the male scientist and his stay-at-home wife. Indeed, the declared 'love' of the computer is a guise for its domination, revealing the pessimism at the film's heart. Add to this a directorial authority that creates a really great vibe; it's filled with classic '70s sci-fi aesthetics without looking dated, psychedelic cut sequences that show the thought patterns of the computer itself, and a slow brooding pace that builds suspense and a sense of unease. It completely rejects the made-for-TV feel of comparable films like **WESTWORLD** or **COLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT**...

Like a strange hybrid of 2001 **SPACE ODYSSEY** and **ROSEMARY'S BABY**, it far transcends its stock paperback source (by Dean Koonz). Sure, it has its problems, but I'd highly recommend it for those with an open mind. **THE END.**

